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RATNER'S RICHES

Pataki OKs \$100M

By Ariella Cohen
The Brooklyn Papers

In the wake of \$66 million in public subsidies approved by the state legislature for Atlantic Yards developer Bruce Ratner, Gov. Pataki promised this week to make it a cool \$100 million — even if he doesn't know how.

"We don't exactly know where the funds will come from, but an appropriate funding stream will be found," said state budget spokesman John Sweeney.

Pataki's \$34-million addition — which will make good on the state's promise to provide \$100 million to the still-unapproved \$3.5-billion development — comes as both Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver (D-Manhattan) and Senate Majority Leader Joe Bruno (R-Brunswick) have lambasted the governor for more than 200 budget cuts, including cuts in education and Medicaid spending.

The difference with Atlantic Yards is that all three Albany leaders support it.

"They are working together to this to commit the \$100 million," said Sweeney.

The money will go towards widening streets and improving infrastructure in the Prospect Heights neighborhood where Ratner wants to build.

In the Senate last week, only Sen. Velmanette Montgomery (D-Prospect Heights) — in whose district Ratner's project would rise — voted against that body's \$33-million subsidy.

Ratner's triumph in Albany offered a chance for critics to charge that legislators are putting the carrot of public subsidies before the stick of public review of, and approval of, Atlantic Yards.

"There seems a fair amount of discussion ... when it comes to the Yankees and the Mets stadiums, but no conversation at all on the Ratner project — which is getting more money than either project," said Daniel Goldstein, a spokesman for Develop Don't Destroy Brooklyn.

Ratner has championed Atlantic Yards as an economic engine that will create jobs and affordable housing. But he's also backed by a prominent lobbying firm, Meyer, Suozzi, English and Klein. A senior labor partner at the firm was appointed by Secretary of Labor Elaine Chao to serve on an advisory board on employee welfare and pension benefits.

"For housing, for economic development and for job creation, this project will meet the important needs of Brooklyn residents and their families," state Sen. Marty Golden (R-Bay Ridge) said in a statement. "For today's generation and for the future, the construction of the Nets arena is something that will bring Brooklyn to new heights, to a dominance as a borough and as a county."



Mini-parade

Wearing their Easter-best while strolling down Montague Street in Brooklyn Heights last Sunday are Shannon, 8, and Siobhan O'Hea, 2.

WHOA NELLIE!

B'Hurst kiddie park loses its moniker

By Dana Rubinstein
The Brooklyn Papers

Nellie Bly Amusement Park, home of the Whirl Wind, the Flying Dumbos, and the childhood memories of tens of thousands of Brooklynites, will get a facelift under its new management — and it will also lose its famous name.

The family that until last year ran the Bensonshurst "fun center" owns the rights to the "Nellie Bly" name, so the park's moniker will change — possibly to the less-colorful "Adventures Amusement Park."

The park's new father-son team — Martin and Marc Garin — recently signed a 20-year lease with the Parks Department to take over the badly worn 4.5-acre amusement park on Shore Parkway. The Garins say they have begun more than \$1 million of renovations.

"We want to get it into the new millennium," said Marc Garin, adding that he hopes to have all the work completed in time for a partial opening on Memorial Day.

But on Monday, with just six weeks to go, the amusement park seemed more like the old Haunted Hotel than a functioning carnival.

With so much work to be done, it would help to have a guy like Paul Bunyan around — but Bunyan, a fixture in the old park's Wild West Land, was out of commission, lying near-horizontally against a wooden fence.

And the Funhouse is in pieces, too.

"We're going to tear it down and replace it with something more modern," said Marc Garin.

Nearby, concessions manager Joseph Fowler quipped, "I'm sure this was up to code — 30 years ago."

More work is to come. Once the Garins acquire the demolition permits, the Haunted Hotel, the Ferris Wheel and the Bumper Cars will be replaced. And Cap'n Video, the old arcade, will be renovated into a combination arcade and food stand.

"If they want Dr. Pepper, they'll get Dr. Pepper [and] if they want Dr. Brown's, they'll get Dr. Brown's," said Marc

See **NELLIE** on page 2

QM2 here: So what's in it for us?



A bag-piper plays for the Queen in Red Hook.

By Ariella Cohen and Gersh Kuntzman
The Brooklyn Papers

The Queen Mary 2 christened the new cruise ship terminal in Red Hook last week, drawing plenty of oohs and ahhs from onlookers, lots of platitudes-filled speeches from politicians and one unanswered question from skeptics, "What's in it for Brooklyn?"

More than 2,000 luxury cruisers sped forth from the world's largest passenger liner on Saturday into the Red Hook sun and then promptly got on buses to Manhattan or the airport.

"This is a very nice terminal, but Brooklyn means nothing to me," said Hoanes Koutoudian, a visitor

from Portugal. "I'll be staying in Manhattan for the food, drinks, and the jazz."

Although the city spent \$56 million to build the new cruise ship terminal at Red Hook's Pier 12, very little has been spent on keeping passengers like Koutoudian in Brooklyn.

Cunard, which operates the 23-story boat, did little to encourage the Queen's passengers to remain in Kings. The company's Web site, for example, refers to its new port of call as "New York, New York."

"See the bright lights of the Big Apple," it reads. "Some come just for the shopping: there's Bloomingdale's on Lex, Tiffany's on Fifth, Barneys and the unique boutiques along Madison. Or head downtown and ex-

See **QUEEN** on page 3



Meow!

City cats have been doing it like rabbits on Spring Break, so Brooklyn's kitten population is soaring. To save these button-nosed darlings, the city's Center for Animal Care and Control has lowered adoption prices to \$30 per kitten (\$45 for two). The fee includes spaying, neutering, vaccinations and one free vet visit. The CACC Brooklyn center (2336 Linden Blvd. in East New York) is open every day from 12 to 7 p.m. For information, visit www.nycacc.org or call (212) 788-4000.

— **Dana Rubinstein**



'SWEET' MEMORIES: The cover of Rich Cohen's book "Sweet and Low" features caricatures of his dysfunctional family.

Sugar substitute ... and spice

Snubbed Sweet'N Low heir reveals all in new memoir

By Gersh Kuntzman
The Brooklyn Papers

The story of the invention of Sweet'N Low is a great tale of post-World War II America. It is a history of the national diet. It is a cautionary tale of political corruption.

But mostly, it is an amazing Brooklyn story. Sweet'N Low is still made today where it was invented in 1957 — in a low-slung, gray factory across from the Brooklyn Navy Yard. From the outside, it looks no different than all the buildings where, decades ago, this borough hammered out its reputation: "Brooklyn makes, the world takes."

Those walls can't talk, but, fortunately for us, writer Rich Cohen can — and does.

Even more fortunately for us, Cohen is not only a gifted journalist — his prior books include "Tough Jews: Fathers, Sons and Gangster Dreams" and "The Avengers: A Jewish War Story" — but he is also the son of Ellen Cohen, the daughter of Sweet'N Low's inventor, Ben Eisenstadt.

Her mom, Betty, later wrote a will that disinherited Ellen "and her issue." (By "issue," grandma meant Cohen and his two siblings.)

"All they have left me is this story," Cohen writes in the introduction to "Sweet and Low" (Farrar, Straus and Giroux), his memoir of how the world's most-famous artificial sweetener saved plenty of teeth, but rotted his family to the core.

"To be disinherited is to be set free!"

Cohen certainly lives up to that promise. His book covers the growth of this famous Brooklyn product, recounting how an orphaned Eisenstadt raised himself and put

himself through law school, only to graduate on the eve of the Great Depression; how Eisenstadt eventually opened a cafeteria that served hungry sailors at the Navy Yard; how Eisenstadt, disgusted by open bowls of sugar at most diners, invented the sugar packet; how Eisenstadt got screwed out of the millions that such an innovation should have brought him; how Eisenstadt turned saccharin, then a drug for diabetics, into the world's first mass-produced fake sweetener; and how his factory later became infiltrated by the mob and linked to alleged campaign finance abuses of former Sen. Al D'Amato.

But Cohen also dives into gory details of the wacky Eisenstadt-Cohen family that only a member of it could know. For instance, one of Eisenstadt's daughters, Gladys, didn't leave her house in Flatbush for 30 years — living in an icebox of a room and ruling the empire with nothing more than a phone, a fax machine and conspiracy theories. Another of Eisenstadt's offspring, Ira, lives on the Upper West Side with a few dozen cats. And the lawyer who fixed Betty's will did not know she was not "of sound mind" when she disinherited "Ellen and her issue."

"I knew all the stuff that had been reported before, but the family stuff was even weirder and even more painful," Cohen told The Brooklyn Papers this week, days after the publication of his book. "Why was my mom disinherited? It's insane."

How insane is this family? When Cohen interviewed his uncle Marvin for the book, Marvin told him that he could also interview his

crazy aunt Gladys — but on one condition: that Cohen not tell Gladys that he spoke to Marvin. Cohen agreed, but then Marvin called Gladys and told her that he had spoken to Cohen. So when Cohen showed up to interview Gladys, she was enraged at him for concealing that he had spoken to Marvin — the very man who asked him not to mention their conversation!

"The classic no-win situation," Cohen said. "But what are you going to do? It's family."

See **SWEET** on page 11



IN EXILE: Rich Cohen, author of "Sweet and Low," in Manhattan last week.

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Benefits of chocolate?

New York Methodist Hospital

Chocolate can be used for a Valentine's Day gift, a warm drink on a cold night, a Halloween bag stuffer and of course a hungry tummy. But, can indulging in chocolate also be used to lower your blood pressure? Health-care professionals at Park Slope's New York Methodist Hospital unwrap the truth behind chocolate's health benefits.

The Wall Street Journal recently published an article looking at the advantages of eating chocolate to better one's health. The article focused on a new study, performed in the Netherlands, that examined 470 healthy, older men who ate products such as cocoa drinks, chocolate pudding and chocolate bars.

According to the Journal, the study "indicated those who ate the equivalent of one-third of a chocolate bar every day had lower blood pressure and a reduced risk of death." Although the research supported the findings of previous, smaller studies on chocolate and health, the researchers acknowledged that it is too soon to conclude that it was the chocolate alone that led to the men's better health.

With the jury still out, the question remains, should you stop by your local bodega and pick up a bar of chocolate to improve your health?

Healthcare professionals at New York Methodist Hospital advise against it. "While cocoa beans do contain flavanol, an antioxidant believed to improve blood vessels, the majority of chocolate found in local stores has been processed, taking out the beneficial components," said Terrence Sacchi, MD, chief of cardiology at

NYM, who has received numerous calls on the subject. "Unfortunately, unprocessed chocolate is very hard to find and the chocolate that is available is high in fat, sugar and calories."

Although Sacchi believes there is a modicum of truth to the chocolate hype, he suggests a diet low in fat and salt as a better alternative for lowering blood pressure.

"Put simply, if you eat a lot of chocolate, you will gain weight and ultimately that is what will cause an increase in blood pressure and a higher risk of heart disease," he said.

Manoj Chhabra, MD, chief of pediatric cardiology at NYM agrees.

"High blood pressure in children and adults is most often a result of being overweight due to physical inactivity," he said. "I recommend a balanced lifestyle of diet and exercise over eating chocolate."

Although Chhabra is hesitant to prescribe a chocolate bar for its health benefits, he does recommend it for the enjoyment. "Because eating chocolate is a pleasure for many people, it is not necessary to cut it out altogether but instead, enjoy it in moderation," he said.

So, if chocolate is not the secret ingredient to better health, what is the recipe for lowering your blood pressure?

Leisa Bryant, RD, associate director of the Department of Food and Nutrition Services at NYM, suggests eating foods that are low in saturated fat, sodium and cholesterol.

"A balanced diet including a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables, low fat dairy, lean meats and unsaturated fats is ideal," she said. "An eating and wellness plan including whole grains, skinless poultry, fish, nuts and regular exercise, as opposed to fatty meats, sweets and sugared beverages, is helpful in lowering blood pressure and improving your overall health."

Although it would be delightful if chocolate was key to lowering blood pressure, until Willy Wonka can produce a tasty flavanol bar, it's wise to save the cocoa products for special occasions.

For more information or to find a physician affiliated with New York Methodist Hospital, please call 718-499-CARE (499-2273).



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Mary Mae celebrates 107 years



Mary Mae Churnside celebrated her 107th birthday on Easter Sunday. She was born in 1899.

The Brooklyn Papers

Mary Mae Churnside is partying like it's 1899.

That's when this longtime Fort Greene resident was born — and on Easter Sunday, dozens of friends and family gathered to celebrate the matriarch's 107th birthday.

Dressed in a white suit, hat and corsage, Churnside — whose life spans three centuries — presided from her wheelchair, a kindly smile on her face.

How old is Mary Mae Churnside? She was born on the day that the Treaty of Paris was proclaimed, formally ending the Spanish-American War — and she lived through the War to End All Wars, the Great Depression, World War II, the Cold War, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the first Gulf War (and, hopefully, the second).

On Sunday, she was reluctant to waste energy on too many words.

"I am happy to be here," she said.

Getting "here" didn't happen until 1978, when she emigrated from Jamaica to Brooklyn at the young age of 79 (she had outlived two husbands and wanted to be closer to her two daughters).

Once here, she devoted herself to the Hanson Place Seventh-day Adventist Church, working in community service, fundraising, and education.

"She decided to marry the church, so she could have some longevity," cracked Lincoln Blackwood, who emceed the event. Church elder Maureen Burke said Churnside was always around, even when others begged off.

"Whether it was rain or snow or shine, she was here at church," Burke said.

Scores of Churnside's relatives and friends — many of them pushing the century mark themselves — gathered around 18 flower-covered tables.

Pastor Melwyn Bob Mounter praised God for protecting Churnside for all these decades.

"We thank You [for] her life and her love," Mounter said. "And we are grateful for the media that is here today, and we pray that they will publish good tidings."

"Amen," said the congregation. — Dana Rubinstein

NELLIE...



The sign at Nellie Bly Park in Bensonhurst has its former name blacked out. New owners have taken over.

Continued from page 1

Garin, referring to a soda popular in New York's Jewish deli-caterers.

The Garins promised to keep the miniature golf course — for this summer at least.

"After, we'll evaluate if we want to keep it," said Marc Garin.

The Garins took over operations from Gena Romano, whose family ran the park since its opening in 1967. The Romanos named the park for Nellie Bly, a muckraking woman journalist in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The family said it gave up the concession because of the park's rising costs.

The new operators have a history in the amusement park business, having run the Adventure's Inn Park in Flushing, Queens, and Meadowlands Fair in New Jersey.

That background pleased Parks Commissioner Adrian Benepe.

"We are pleased that [the Garins have] agreed to renovate and improve this facility," he said. "It will bring joy to children of all ages for years to come."

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OUR OPINION

Don't let tourists drift

RESIDENTS OF RED HOOK said they were awakened last Saturday by the foghorn on the Queen Mary 2 as she slipped into her brand-new berth at the foot of Pioneer Street.

That foghorn should be a wake-up call for the entire borough. The arrival of the world's largest passenger ship — and the debarkation of thousands of wealthy tourists — is a historic moment that Brooklyn must not let slip by.

As our own Gersh Kuntzman and Ariella Cohen discovered as they interviewed seamy travelers leaving the ship last Saturday, virtually none had any intention of exploring the borough where their massive boat was moored. Instead, they hopped right onto waiting buses that whisked them into Manhattan, where they could spend their money

on Fifth Avenue.

Hey, there, big spender: Brooklyn has a pretty lively Fifth Avenue, too!

While we're not so naïve that we expect Brooklyn to be a cruise tourist's dream vacation, the borough did expect — and must now demand — that the city tourism-industrial complex do much more to promote Brooklyn to the million passengers who will arrive here this year. Yes, Bloomingdale's is "like no other store in the world," but that doesn't mean a few tourists can't be encouraged to spend some money at Luce on the Hook, one of the closest boutiques to the Queen Mary's new home.

Borough President Markowitz will put Brooklyn-savvy, map-wielding volunteers at the terminal whenever boats come and go — and that's a great start. But it's no substitute

for an aggressive campaign that actually puts cruise ship passengers on a bus tour of our borough.

Cunard officials said they are open to the idea, but that means Brooklyn needs to do the hard work itself. A good idea would be for the Brooklyn Marriott to make special deals with passengers beginning or ending their QM2 trips — but when The Brooklyn Papers called the hotel to see what was in the works, a spokesman said that nothing was.

Perhaps we shouldn't be surprised. After all, this is a borough that still does not have — despite all the confused tourists wandering aimlessly around Cadman Plaza Park — a decent sign leading people to the footpath of our main tourist attraction, the Brooklyn Bridge. And don't get us started on the Promenade!

ALL DRAWN OUT



Queen Mary 2 © The Brooklyn Papers

LETTERS

Park's grass should be the real thing

To the editor:

I attended the rally to protest the paving of Cadman Plaza Park with FieldTurf, a softer variant of AstroTurf ("Turf for Cadman Plaza," April 15).

It is difficult to understand how New Yorkers can stand by silently and not resist the plastic wrapping a public park, instead of thinking of ways to maintain real grass. This quick fix has other implications — as the site of a major veterans' memorial, it is inconceivable that Arlington cemetery would be upgraded to AstroTurf! What about AstroTurf on the White House lawn?

Yet, the Parks Department has taken precisely that route.

We should all consider the startling fact that New York City is one of the largest purchasers of AstroTurf. There's more to replacing real grass with plastic grass — it involves the other green: city contracts.

To seal New York City in this way only contributes to an intensification of global warming as well as making our city even less hospitable to birds, plants and the worm population that will be annihilated by the new turf.

Politicians who support this project will definitely not receive my vote. This project marks the commitment of our Parks Department to plastic gardening, intense pesticide use and a corporate mentality.

Name held by request, Brooklyn Heights

Editor's note: We offered the Parks Department an opportunity to respond.

To the editor:

The renovation of Cadman Plaza incorporates synthetic turf at the central lawn, not the area surrounding the WWII memorial. Additionally, we'll add 20 percent more natural grass to the park's perimeter.

We designed the project in consultation with the community, including United Veterans of Kings County and the American Legion. It was presented at public meetings and approved by the community board and the Art Commission.

Today's synthetic turf is safer, softer, and more versatile than before. Because it uses recycled materials and requires no chemical pesticides

or fertilizers, it is environmentally friendly, saves money, and, most importantly, is usable year round.

The lawn is popular with school groups and neighborhood children. Even with new irrigation, it wouldn't be able to withstand the daily beat of hundreds of feet. Allowing it to remain a disdbowl — or a mad puzzle when it rains — would be more of a disservice to our borough's veterans than anything else.

Julius Spiegel
Brooklyn Borough Commissioner, Parks Department

Keep reducing

To the editor:

Bruce Ratner should be congratulated on having agreed to some reductions in his Atlantic Yards development ("Ratner reamed over Yards 'concession,'" April 8).

Mr. Ratner can now sit down with his architect and experts, and they can all join in making plans for further reductions. Hopefully, his revised plan will eventually be reduced to 50 percent of the old plan! That would be perfect.

An attractive residential community to house perhaps a few thousand happy Brooklynites without overcrowding, and within the limits of the local resources (water, sewage, gas, etc.) would greatly benefit our borough.

Keep getting smaller, Mr. Ratner,

and the best of good luck to you.

Veronica Weiss, Prospect Heights

Park right

To the editor:

Thank you for your recent story on police illegal parking ("Cops illegally parked all over the place," April 1). I hope you will continue to follow this story as I am skeptical about the NYPD's promise to take action against these rogue parkers (they're also in the bicycle lane on Adams Street).

It's too bad that The Brooklyn Papers did not publish photos of the cars, their license plates, and the permits displayed in the windshields — and then presented these to the 84th Precinct for comment and investigation. This might be a way to get results.

George Konul, Park Slope

Editor's note: We did take such pictures and presented permit and license numbers to the NYPD.

Favorite mistake

To the editor:

A few weeks ago, I objected to Chiara Cowan's use of the word "infamous" to describe Bob Newhart's routines.

But the problem persists. Now it's Kevin Filipski ("Serious Comedy,"

April 15): "Even though [Oscar] Wilde is infamous for his epigrams and witticisms..."

"Infamous" is, again, incorrect. You could look it up.

David Hawkins, Park Slope

Editor's note: Please see page 3 and let us know if the terminology is used correctly. We sure hope it is!

Beetles are serious

To the editor:

Regarding your snide article, "Beetles are Back in Brooklyn" (April 15), I have a question: I assume you would have been one of those slick-toed fiddlers fiddling while Rome burned — wouldn't you have? Enjoy your laughs now, oh mocking Mr. Kuntzman, because you won't be laughing so hard when the Parks Department has to chop down every tree on your street — and on every block around you for two miles.

These beetles are a scourge and I think I speak for everyone on MY Brooklyn block when I say, "This is no laughing matter!"

So write your clichey headlines to sell your miserable paper as you funnel for laughs like a two-bit tap-dancing toad in love with your own froth. If those beetles keep coming, you deserve each other!

Averil Hauptman III, Crown Heights

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The Brooklyn Papers 2006 SUMMER CAMP GUIDE

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congregationbethelohim.org

Preschool Division
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Directors: Maura Lorenzen and Jaci Israel
Ages: 3 to 5-1/2
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www.bkcenter.org

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Director: Patsy McCarty
Junior Summer Arts
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Young Artists Community
Ages: entering grades 6-8
July 10 - August 18
hours 9 am to 4 pm
Activities: performing arts and community service.

Teen Intensives
Ages: entering grades 9-11
July 10 - 21
hours 10 am to 4 pm
Activities: PerformanceXperience, Theater with Falconworks.

Creative Arts Program
181 Lincoln Pl., Park Slope
(718) 789-6060
bcs@berkeleycarroll.org

Ages: 8 to 14 years
June 26 to July 27
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Huggs Day School Summer
763 President St., Park Slope
(718) 230-5255

Director: Randie Bader and Gary Siegel
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215 Pacific St., Cobble Hill
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jewishrevolution@aol.com
Director: Simcha Weinstein
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Extended day 8 am to 6:30 pm
Activities include: cooking, environmental science projects, fencing, tennis, swimming, 3 trips per week
Open House: Sat., April 29, 11 am

Park Explorers

See CAMPS on page 7

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CAMPS...

Continued from page 6

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www.parkslopeplaycamp.com

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Director: Ronny Schindler

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eshannon@openhouseparkschool.com

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Brooklyn Papers

SCHOOL PARENT STYLE

TEENS CAMPS MUSIC

A May wedding for Spot

IT MAY NOT BE JUNE, but it's wedding season in the Oh So Feisty One's third-grade class at PS 321. Spot, OSFO's favorite stuffed dog, and Kate, the stuffed bear of her classmate, are engaged.

Kate is a divorcee with a young baby bear named Bob. Jr. Spot will be his stepfather. This is not a first marriage for Spot either. He was previously married to Annika, another stuffed bear. But Annika kept bossing Spot around. Finally, Spot told OSFO to tell Annika's owner that he wanted a divorce.

Two days later, they signed the divorce papers. It was a bitter ride to Splitville, Annika wanted to stay married to Spot, but Spot refused.

Interestingly, not one of the girls involved in these weddings is from a divorced family. But that doesn't mean they haven't seen a marital breakdown or two. This is Brooklyn, land of divorce and joint custody. (Full disclosure: Smartmom and Hepcat rarely raise their voices and NEVER fight, but Smartmom hears that sort of thing does happen in other homes.)

Chances are, most kids in Park Slope know at least one

SMART mom

By Louise Crawford

kid whose parents are divorced, if not more. OSFO seems fairly nonchalant about the whole thing. Just the other day, she told Smartmom, "Blondie is staying at her father's girlfriend's house this weekend. Can we have a playdate?"

Or she'll ask, as she did last year, "How come Groovy Grandpa and Manhattan Granny (Smartmom's parents) got divorced?" Smartmom, a bit taken aback, didn't really know what to say, so murmured: "They didn't get along after being married for 20 years," and quickly changed the subject.

Needless to say, there's plenty of divorce and marital disagreement on television, in the movies ("The Parent Trap") and in chapter books ("Amber Brown Goes

Fourth," by Paula Danziger and "It's Not the End of the World," by Judy Blume).

For kids growing up nowadays, divorce is in the air they breathe. Even in enlightened, kid-centric Park Slope, where there's no shortage of child psychologists, divorce is as ugly as ever.

SO WHILE OSFO AND her friends play bear break-ups, the kids whose parents are divorced put out; they're living it first hand, coping with custody arrangements, parents' boyfriends and girlfriends. No wonder they'd rather play doghouse or lopsided than divorce.

Smartmom knows what that's like. Nearly 30 years after her own parents' split-up, Smartmom is still scared by the divorce.

While everyone did live happily ever after, it took its toll on her emotional life and relationships. (But she and Hepcat NEVER fight.)

Maybe there is some sort of catch about it for OSFO and her friends. Perhaps, as scary as it is, divorce sounds exciting, risky, and even interesting.

That's a sad thought. But, since when are children's games totally wholesome?

The wedding date has not been set. But Spot will wear a spiffy tuxedo, shoes, and top hat, that OSFO's aunt, Diaper Diva, was willing to buy for over \$20 bucks. He looks very dapper in it. There's even a white rose on the lapel.

Kate will be wearing a blue tea dress (no white for this divorcee). OSFO created a wedding bracelet out of colored wire that Spot will give her on



The Oh So Feisty One's pals participate in the remarriage of her bear, Spot (center, in tuxedo), at the PS 321 playground.

their special day. Judge Emma, OSFO's best, best friend, will marry the two lovers. "It's going to be a bear/dog wedding. That's their religion."

The animals and the girls had a rehearsal last week in the school's backyard. At the rehearsal, Spot's ex, Annika, who will be singing at the wedding, kissed Spot and told him that she wants him back.

OSFO has high hopes for

the marriage and thinks that Spot and Kate are a good match. "They are planning on having three more children in the future. Spot will be a very good stepfather to little Bob, Jr.," she says.

Mazel tov to the bride and groom. If kids' games bear any resemblance to the real thing, they're going to need it.

Louise Crawford also writes "Only the Blog Knows Brooklyn."

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By Lucky Ngamwajaset

The Brooklyn Papers

The playoffs have begun in Swamp Jersey, with the Nets starting in earnest their quest for an NBA title. Jersey had a phenomenal regular season — winning another Atlantic Division title and notching 50 wins. But the post-season is a different animal altogether, and questions have to be asked.

The first round

It doesn't matter if it's Washington, Indiana, Milwaukee or Chicago, the Nets will win. The Swamptrains were 2-1 against Milwaukee, 1-2 against Chicago, 1-2 versus Indiana and 2-1 against Washington. The Brooklyn-bound Nets are super- or to any of the teams they would face in the first round and should outclass anyone they play. Then again, if this season taught us anything, when the Nets aren't on their "A" game, they can be upset.

Beyond

If everything breaks right, the NBA finals are a reality. But there will be no championship parade in the Swamp parking lot. Getting to the finals means a trip to either Detroit or Miami, and while the Nets have had success this year against those teams (2-2 against the Pistons, 2-1 against the Heat), they would have to play the perfect series, especially against the Pistons. Motor City's first-line is simply too physical for the Nets and the disadvantage would be magnified in a seven-game series. The Nets also have to worry about the Cavaliers for one reason: King LeBron. James has already shown he could beat the Nets single-handedly (April 8 at E. Rutherford) and would be a handful in a series.

Advantages?

It helps to have four of the best starters in the NBA in Jason Kidd, Vince Carter, Richard Jeff-

erson and the emerging Nenad Krstic. Together, they had a marvelous season, all averaging double figures in points. Clifford Robinson has given the Nets everything his 38-year-old body is capable of doing. Led by Kidd, the human triple-double, the Nets can just about run up and down the court with any team in the NBA. And they have a guy in Carter who's not afraid to take the final shot in the game. Team defense has improved throughout the year, giving up an average of 92.5 points per game, sixth overall in the NBA, thanks to tight performances down the stretch (including locking down Detroit and Phoenix on back-to-back nights two weeks ago).

Chemistry will not be a problem, as Jefferson and Carter have meshed well together, quieting earlier doubts about their ability to co-exist.

Disadvantages?

If only the Nets had a decent bench and a rebounding, shot-blocking big man, there would be no stopping them. But those are big "ifs." When your leading rebounders are your point guard, small forward and shooting guard, you've got problems on the inside, no matter how good the rest of team is. Going up against a physical front line such as Detroit or Miami would be a chore. Krstic is a nice player and Jason Collum and Robinson can hold their own for periods of time, but against Wallace and Shaq, the Nets are going to really struggle. The bench has been awful — excluding Robinson and Jacques Vaughn. For whatever reason, Zoran Planinic doesn't get many minutes and the rest of the bench is unremarkable. In the playoffs, depth is exposed. And the Nets don't have any.

Still...

It's a little strange to say, but if the Nets are going to go all the way, the lead scorer needs to step up. Last season, in the Nets first-round loss to the Heat, Carter averaged 26.8 points per game. For whatever reason, Carter wears the stigma that he isn't a big-game player. This is his chance to prove the haters wrong. Krstic also needs to continue his ascension to one of the top players in the league and build on his strong play in the second half of the season.



Vince Carter (No. 15) looks to lead the Nets through a successful playoff run.

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2 jewelers shot on Flatbush

By Lilo H. Stainton
The Brooklyn Papers

Two brothers who own a jewelry store on Flatbush Avenue suffered gunshot wounds when they tried to fight off a pair of armed robbers with a weapon of their own, police said.

The thieves wandered into the shop, at the corner of Pacific Street, just after 7:30 pm on April 14. When they pulled guns and tried to rob the place, the brothers grabbed their own gun in self-defense.

The perpetrators and proprietors exchanged gunfire and the business owners, ages 21 and 27, each took a bullet. One shot struck the younger brother in the leg, while the other round pierced his older sibling's face.

Neither wound is life-threatening, cops said.

The robbers fled with plenty of bling: a pair of diamond earrings, a diamond-studded bracelet and a ring with a similar rock. They also snatched a gold chain, a cellphone and one man's wallet, stuffed with \$500. But the suspects didn't get far. Police arrested the two, ages 31 and 25, later that day on multiple felony charges. The officers also collected two semi-automatic weapons, six extra rounds, multiple bullet fragments, a sweatshirt, jeans and other clothing items from the two gunmen.

Heights parents call cops after party theft

Maybe the missing Chateau Pichon put them over the edge.

Whatever it was, one Brooklyn Heights couple decided enough was enough when they discovered designer jeans, a cashmere coat, fine wines and other high-end items — valued at over \$3,500 — missing from their Livingston Street home after their teenage son hosted a slumber party on March 31, police said.

Four teenage boys arrived at their apartment, near Court Street, around 10 pm, the parents told police.

After the teens left the next day, the couple discovered the following goods had disappeared: a \$200 pair of designer jeans, a black woman's coat, a men's sport jacket, a three-quarter-length cashmere men's coat, valued at \$2,000, an iPod, two cellphones and a pair of chargers, a vinyl hat, the DVD game "The Warriors," and \$60.

Their sticky-fingered guests are alleged to have also lifted two bottles of Chateau Pichon-Longueville, a French red wine worth \$200 a bottle.

The couple contacted the teens' families and recovered some of the items. But when some goods remained missing last week, the family reported the theft to police.

Masked rob

A man in a black ski mask and armed with a semi-automatic weapon broke into a Court Street grocery on April 11, police said.

The burglar burst into the shop around 4:20 am with his weapon out. He cocked the gun, threatened to fire it, and told the

Hynes: How to avoid victimization

The Brooklyn Papers

Brooklyn District Attorney Charles Hynes will join the 78th Precinct in Prospect Heights on Tuesday to help Brooklynites learn to avoid becoming crime victims.

Identity theft will be the primary focus of the April 25 meeting, at 7:30 pm in the 78th Precinct stationhouse (65 Sixth Ave., between Bergen and Dean streets, near Flatbush Avenue).

For information about the meeting, call Daniel Murphy at the District Attorney's office at (718) 250-3739. — Stainton

POLICE BLOTTER

counter worker. "Give me your money." The 31-year-old employee emptied the cash register drawer and turned over \$950.

The gunman forced the worker into the back room and told him to stay there for at least five minutes. The employee didn't get a good look at his attacker, but a security camera captured the entire crime.

Knabbed

A man with a box-cutter threatened his victim with deadly harm during his third robbery in Carroll Gardens on April 10, police said.

The thug crept up behind the 36-year-old man as he walked along West Ninth Street, near Court Street, around 4:30 pm. He threw his arm around the victim's shoulders, put the blade to his throat and insisted, "I'm going to slice you — unless you give me your money."

The man handed over \$40, and the robber took off. But police were on the lookout for the thief, who allegedly held up two other men earlier that day, possibly in a neighboring precinct. Those two victims, ages 28 and 30, helped identify the suspect and police arrested the 47-year-old man on multiple robbery charges. The thief's total take in the three crimes was \$46.32, police said.

Robber bags it

A thief armed with a gun stole a designer shoulder bag from a woman walking home on Bergen Street on April 13, police said.

The thug approached the 36-year-old victim as she neared Bond Street just before 11 pm. He flashed the weapon and snatched a \$1,400 Valentino purse from her shoulder, also netting a wallet and cellphone.

Chain snatched

A pair of robbers ripped a necklace from a 44-year-old man riding on the A train on April 13, police said.

The pair approached the victim and his 22-year-old son as the Manhattan-bound train neared the High Street station, at 11:30 pm. One grabbed the chain, which held a ring, and the pair dashed from the subway.

Home invaded

A trio of gun-wielding thugs forced their way into a Lorraine Street home, tied up the resident and raided the place on April 11, police said.

The three waited for their 37-year-old victim outside his apartment, near Henry Street. When the man returned at 3:20 pm, they sneaked up with guns drawn and pushed him inside where they forced him to lie face down.

"Where are the drugs? Give me the money," the invaders insisted, cops said.

They bound his hands and feet with a black extension cord and began to ransack his home, taking \$360, a Sony Playstation, an Xbox gaming device, and health insurance cards, police said.

Subway knifer

A man with a knife robbed a young woman on the B train on April 10, police said.

The thief approached the 19-year-old victim riding a Manhattan-bound train around 7:30 pm. He thrust a knife up against her right side and demanded she turn over her cellphone.

The victim pushed him away and tried to run off, but the mugger snatched the mobile phone from her belt. She managed to get free and left the train at the Dekalb Avenue station, while the robber kept on riding, police said.

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By Lilo H. Stainton
The Brooklyn Papers

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The thieves wandered into the shop, at the corner of Pacific Street, just after 7:30 pm on April 14. When they pulled guns and tried to rob the place, the brothers grabbed their own gun in self-defense. The perpetrators and proprietors exchanged gunfire and the business owners, ages 21 and 27, each took a bullet. One shot struck the younger brother in the leg, while the other round pierced his older sibling's face.

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But the suspects didn't get far. Police arrested the two, ages 31 and 25, later that day on multiple felony charges. The officers also collected two semi-automatic weapons, six extra rounds, multiple bullet fragments, a sweatshirt, jeans and other clothing items from the two gunmen.

Nab foot freak

Foot fetish freaks don't just linger in seedy sex clubs or prowl porno sites on the Web. At least one pedi-worshiper spent last week wandering around Park Slope.

The fondler actually attacked a 24-year-old victim after tracking her — on foot, of course — for almost a dozen blocks on April 13, police said. As she neared the corner of Union Street and Fourth Avenue, at 7:50 pm, the victim turned and con-

2 jewelers shot after they fire on bandits

POLICE BLOTTER

fronted the man trailing her, insisting that he stop.

Instead, the creep lunged at her, grabbed her legs and immediately wrapped them in a red cloth.

As the fondler fought for a quick feel of her sandal-clad feet the victim struggled to get free, punching and trying to kick her attacker.

The freak grabbed her cellphone, but dropped it in his excitement. He snatched one of her sandals instead and dashed down Fourth Avenue. The victim gave chase, pursuing the tootsie-bound down the block with one bare foot slapping the pavement.

Police arrived moments later and arrested the 21-year-old foot-fondler for robbery — and sources said additional charges are likely.

Midnight mug

It was a message that didn't need repeating.

When a robber demanded cash from a 32-year-old woman walking home from the subway along Seventh Avenue moments after midnight on April 14, police said she quickly complied.

The thief may not have been armed, but when he sneaked up behind her at the corner of Berkeley Place, his words seemed threatening enough: "I'm only going to ask you once; give me your f---ing money!"

The victim emptied her pockets and the mugger ran toward Eighth Avenue with \$5 and her cellphone.

Police are looking for a black man, 5-foot-7 and 150 pounds, dressed in a white jogging suit and a white hat at the time of the attack.

Senior victim

An elderly woman lost \$2,000 to a scam artist who claimed she needed help breaking a large bill earlier this month, police said.

The thief approached the 72-year-old Flatlands resident around noon on April 5, near the corner of Sixth Avenue and Sixth Street. She told the woman she had found a wallet that contained large-denomination currency that she couldn't cash and convinced the victim to withdraw \$2,000 in small bills from her bank.

The senior agreed, collected the cash from her bank and placed it in the hands of the stranger. The scammer thanked her, excused herself to use

the restroom and disappeared. Police have a only a limited description of the suspect.

Armed McRob

A trio of gun-toting thieves terrorized the employees of a burger joint during their April 15 robbery of the Fourth Avenue franchise, police said.

The trouble began at around 10:15 pm, when a 19-year-old employee turned away from the counter to check the work schedule posted behind her. That's when three thugs posing as customers pulled out large guns and announced their intentions to obtain something more than two all-beef patties, special sauce, lettuce, cheese, pickles, onions and a sesame-seed bun.

"Look here, look here ... give me the money," one robber said.

The stolen sandals were the 19-year-old to open the store's safe, and pocketed the \$1,000 cash.

On the way to the door, the gunman made the young woman and several of her co-workers lie face-down on the

floor. One thief fired a single shot near the safe, but no one was injured.

Police are searching for three black men — one 5-foot-8 and 170 pounds, standing

out in a white T-shirt; the second, at 5-foot-7, also wore white, but witnesses couldn't be sure about the fashion choices of third thief, who stood 5-foot-8.

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Hynes: How to avoid victimization

The Brooklyn Papers

Brooklyn District Attorney Charles Hynes will join the 78th Precinct in Prospect Heights on Tuesday to help Park Slopes learn to avoid becoming crime victims.

Identity theft will be the primary focus of the April 25 meeting, scheduled for 7:30 pm at the 78th Precinct stationhouse (65 Sixth Ave., between Bergen and Dean streets, near Flatbush Avenue).

Although violent crime continues to fall, identity theft is a growing problem nationwide. Police in Brooklyn regularly receive reports from residents who have discovered that strangers have opened credit card or cellphone accounts in their name.

For information about the meeting, call Daniel Murphy at the District Attorney's office at (718) 250-3739. — Stainton

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Fossella: Ridge's million-dollar candidate

By Gersh Kuntzman
The Brooklyn Papers

It's official: Democrat Steve Harrison has about a million-to-one chance of unseating Rep. Vito Fossella (R-Bay Ridge).

That's the story behind the campaign fundraising numbers released this week. Through the end of March, four-term incumbent Fossella has raised \$1,013,677, according to papers filed with the Federal Election Commission.

By comparison, Harrison didn't even file first-quarter papers because he had not raised the minimum \$5,000.

Even though he trails the money race by more than a million dollars, the challenger said he wasn't worried.

"We're right where we want to be at this point," he said, but then pointed out that he had initially had trouble fundraising because City Councilman Bill DeBlasio (D-Park Slope) had been ponder-

ing jumping into the race. "That stopped my fundraising dead," Harrison said, adding that he had high hopes for his first fundraiser, April 19, at the Banana Leaf restaurant in Bay Ridge.



Fossella certainly has not gotten off to slow start, raising more than a million, overall and close to \$200,000 this quarter.

These are record numbers for," said his spokesman Craig Donner. "It shows the strong support he has in the communi-

ty and across the city."

It also shows how keenly Republicans want to hold onto the Staten Island-Bay Ridge seat, which has been in GOP hands for years, despite the district's overwhelmingly Democratic voter registration.

Just under half of Fossella's war-chest has come from political action committees — PAC donations amounted to \$490,000, compared to \$521,000 generated from individual supporters.

Thomas Sipp of Bay Ridge, who gave Fossella \$300, is the candidate's only individual contributor from the Brooklyn part of the district.

National Republican leaders are watching the race closely, but Donner said the GOP had not raised any money for the candidate.

Still, Harrison remained undeterred. "In a grass-roots campaign, we have the advantage," he said. "We may not match him dime for dime, but we will beat him with volunteers."

Students dial 'M' for melee

Tangle with cops over schools' cell ban

By Lilo H. Stainton
The Brooklyn Papers

Five students of a Park Slope high school were arrested in an April 12 melee that began as a protest of the Department

of Education's longtime ban on cellphones.

Students at the Secondary School for Law, Journalism and Research, formerly John Jay HS, marched out of class and onto Seventh Avenue at around 1 p.m. The protest started peacefully, but a scuffle quickly ensued between the students and frustrated school security officers.

Cops arrived and arrested five students. Police records of the incident show that cops used force to subdue at least one of the suspects.

Depending on whom you ask, mobile telephones are either a classroom menace or an emergency lifeline. But whatever the definition, they are banned in schools.

To protest the longstanding ban, teenagers had poured onto Seventh Avenue, where they waved signs and chanted, "We want cellphones!"

The students — police estimated the crowd at 100, but others reported it to be closer to 150 — said it was unfair for school officials to take their property, especially when they need the telephones for emergencies. School officials banned the devices long before they became popular, in 1987, and say they have no plans to reverse course.

Members of 100 Blacks in Law Enforcement, a police-abuse watchdog, have joined students in protesting the police response that day. The group said cellphones are just one of students' many concerns, and that the kids' frustration was mostly due to the "deplorable conditions" at the school, a critical lack of resources and overly aggressive security.

"The cellphone issue was really the straw that broke the camel's back," explained Mary Claxton, a retired police detective and co-founder of 100 Blacks. "There's a lot more to this story."

According to the police report lodged at the 78th Precinct, the crowd "engaged in tumultuous and violent conduct (and) intentionally created a grave risk of causing public alarm resulting in police, school officers and other students being injured and property damage to nearby parked vehicles."

Principal Larry Woodbridge called the protest "peaceable," but four students were hit with misdemeanor charges of disorderly conduct. A school security officer struck the fifth suspect, a 15-year-old boy, with his baton after the teen hit a school sergeant on the hand, drawing blood, police said. The student also violently resisted arrest, according to police reports.

Officers said the level of force was necessary to "overcome assault" and claimed the boy's struggle caused further injury to both cops and himself.

But 100 Blacks blamed any

injuries, which were minor, on police exuberance. Claims of any property damage were exaggerated, Claxton said.

It was based on the heavy-handedness of the police department," he said.

One suspect, a 17-year-old girl, may file a complaint against the officers who slammed her into a parked car and verbally assaulted her once in custody, Claxton said.

His group held a press conference with students last week to protest the department's actions. Claxton said 100 Blacks, along with the newly formed Trust Us Student Coalition, plan to march from the John Jay building to local school district headquarters on May 2.

Students also object to the ban on any food or drinks from outside the building, which means they can't bring lunch from home, he said.

School officials also don't permit pupils to bring electronics, including laptop computers, into the building.

Students say they wait up to 45 minutes every morning to be screened.

Claxton said, "They have prison rules."

The protest also followed stepped-up screening at the school's metal detectors, which resulted in some 80 students losing their phones earlier that week, the New York Times reported.

The day after the arrests, Mayor Bloomberg said police would begin using portable metal detectors to conduct random searches at the 80 percent of middle and high schools that don't have screening systems in place.

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The Brooklyn Papers' essential guide to the Borough of Kings

April 22, 2006

Pretic legacy

Artist draws on history to create works rich with memory

By Lisa J. Curtis
GO Brooklyn editor

The vibrant, complicated artworks of Aminah Lynn Robinson are as unique and engaging as the artist herself.

One might expect a woman born in 1940 to have a grandmotherly poof of curls on her head, but Robinson's dome is sleek and her ears are trimmed in rows of gold hoops. The MacArthur "genius" grant winner says she "never had any doubt in my mind about being an artist. I had my first exhibition when I was 8-years-old. I hung my paintings on a clothesline with pins."

GO Brooklyn spoke with Robinson at the Brooklyn Museum, where samples of 50 years of her boundless creativity are on display in "Symphonic Poem." Community is one of the overarching themes in her art, which ranges from painting to sculpture to needlework to elaborate, never-quite-finished pieces that she calls "RagGonNons."

She's been inspired by her hometown of Columbus, Ohio — and Pinxeter Village, the federally funded metropolitan housing development where she grew up — to create several pieces that incorporate her research into the city's history. One such work is a festive painting on cloth, "Life in Sellville" (1981-82), which is the text-and-image portrait of a long-disappeared town settled by circus folk from 1871-1900. After "digging and digging into public records and interviewing people," Robinson was able to create an artwork — think a Grandma Moses painting in Technicolor — that painstakingly details the forgotten community down to each animal's pen.

Robinson's works are also inspired by the places she travels to, such as the hip-hop-inspired painting "The Canwoman Who Carried Her Home Through the Streets of New York City" (1989). The "Wall Street" sign behind the displaced woman's head underscores the irony of a homeless woman on a street where so many have reaped so much wealth.

The artist has even been inspired by her work's visit to Brooklyn and has created large, borough-centric woodcuts — three of which hang in "Symphonic Poem." She is also carving a door, titled "A Tree Grows in Brooklyn," but Robinson said that it is so large the carvers couldn't get it out of her house, so she made 12 woodcuts instead. She said she was "touched deeply" by the neighborhoods of Westville, Brownsville and Crown Heights.

Her signature medium, "hogmwag" — which Robinson learned how to make from her father — is a mixture of mud, grease, dyes and glue that she uses in works



Art that sings: (Clockwise from top) Inside "Symphonic Poem: The Art of Aminah Brenda Lynn Robinson" at the Brooklyn Museum, Robinson stands in front of her 1994 installation, "My Lord, What a Morning," which plays the titular spiritual; Robinson's 1984 "Basket Woman," made from her family's recipe of "hogmwag" (mud, grease, dyes and glue) and other materials; and a page from the "To Be a Drum Jazz" artist book.



such as "Basket Woman" (1984), a sculpture of a slim female figure with an elongated neck, clothed in cheerful printed fabric, layered like feathers. The figure seems to have grown right up out of her base of peanut buttery stuff and buttons, like those jaunty silk flowers waving from her hat.

While "Basket Woman" is a completed piece, "Symphonic Poem" also includes examples of Robinson's original concept, the "RagGonNons." These literally go on and on, as Robinson works on the pieces over time.

"The RagGonNons won't be completed until my own transition," she told GO Brooklyn.

The chair, "Gift of Love," that is dedicated to her late son, Sydney, is an example of a "RagGonNon" which she has been assembling and fine-tuning since 1974 from wood, "hogmwag," mud, leather and music boxes.

Robinson said she made the chair for her son, who was also an artist, when they first moved into their first house, and he complained that they didn't have any furniture. He died in 1994 at age 27.

Over the years, this chair has come to resemble a rustic throne with its many tree branches and hand-tooled leather seat.

But Robinson, who adopted the name "Aminah" — Arabic for trustworthy — after a 1979 trip to Africa, is also a citizen of the world, and she explores her African-American heritage in pieces such as the harrowing "Nightmare of Horrors" which depicts slaves falling to their deaths from a boat and "One Day in 1307 AD: King Abubakur II," a portrait of a West African king.

Whether her subjects are regal or a Pinxeter Village resident making soap, Robinson's works explore those universal

themes of family and community — reminding the viewer that we are all inextricably linked to those who have come before us and have a responsibility to be good to those among us now.

ART
"Symphonic Poem: The Art of Aminah Brenda Lynn Robinson" is on display through Aug. 13 at the Brooklyn Museum (200 Eastern Parkway at Washington Avenue in Prospect Heights).
On Sunday, April 23 at 3 p.m. members of the Brooklyn Philharmonic will perform a chamber music program, "Homages" inspired by "Symphonic Poem." A free gallery talk by a museum guide precedes the concert. For tickets, call (718) 488-5913.
Admission to the museum is \$8 adults, \$4 students and seniors, free to children age 12 and younger. For information, visit the Web site www.brooklynmuseum.org or call (718) 638-5003.



CINEMA



First timers

By Lisa J. Curtis
GO Brooklyn editor

This year's Tribeca Film Festival includes the world premiere of two feature films with Brooklyn connections: "Brother's Shadow" and "The Big Bad Swim."

Directed by former Carroll Gardens resident Todd Yellin, "Brother's Shadow" (pictured below), is the story of Jake Groden (Scott Cohen), a down-and-out prodigal son who returns to Brooklyn after his brother's death. He tries to patch things up with his curmudgeonly father (Judd Hirsch) and skeptical sister-in-law (Susan Floyd), while forging a relationship with his teen nephew (Elliot Korte), who didn't even know he existed.

While the clan agonizes over selling their furniture biz, Jake steps into his twin brother's shoes — and bed — with incendiary results.

To create a realistic woodworking shop and believable craftsmen, Yellin, 40, told GO Brooklyn that he turned to East Williamsburg designer Scott Braun — only to find that life really did imitate art.

"He inspired some of the main character," Yellin recalled. "He does really interesting designs and is the 'anti-machine' guy that I was trying to make Jake into."

Braun said that although documentary filmmakers have approached him in the past, this is the first time his insight was sought for a narrative film.

"[Yellin] wanted an opinionated, iconoclastic, Brooklyn, Jewish furniture maker and it turns out there was one and it was me," said Braun with a laugh. "There's a whole scene about the difference between planing and sanding — that's all my shick."

"That's what appealed to me: the way they were trying to make furniture-making a character in the movie, like what 'Sideways' did for wine," said Braun, the president of Furniture New York. "For me, it was exciting to have a voice in the way the public looks at furniture-making."

In addition to his techniques and theories, some examples of Braun's furniture were shot for the film as well as works by Jonah Zuckerman of DUMBO's City Jammy and Susan Woods of DUMBO's Awwson.

Yellin shot on location all over the borough; in one scene, a dejected Jake lies near the water in DUMBO — with the River Cafe as a backdrop.

While his hero, er, anti-hero may be down and out, there's nothing but celebration on tap for Yellin, who dubs himself "a gritty survivor" who navigated the competitive movie industry's "endurance test" for years before arriving at the festival's "NY, NY Narrative Feature Competition."

"I am thrilled," said Yellin. "Almost all of the actors are New York-born. I think it's appropriate that the world premiere should be here."

Yellin's film is competing with 12 other movies, including William Tyler Smith's menage a trois flick, "Kiss Me Again," also set in Brooklyn.

Good to be 'Bad'

Showing in the festival's "Discovery" section, which highlights "up-and-coming directors," is "The Big Bad Swim" (pictured top) by Park Slope filmmaker Ishai Sotter, 26.

"It's nerve-racking," said Sotter of the honor bestowed on his feature film debut. "It's overwhelming right now — but it's a good way."

In Sotter's work, a diverse group of adults gather at a suburban recreation center to learn how to swim from unapproachable Noah (Jeff Branson of "All My Children"). Over the next six weeks, the students make friends, quarrel, hook up and confront their fears with varying degrees of success.

Between classes, Amy (Peggy Brewster), a high school calculus teacher enduring a bad break-up with her husband, reaches out to confident beauty Jordan (Jess Weixler, a Carroll Gardens resident) for some girl talk — while Jordan paddles her way towards Noah.

In the meantime, Jordan's lively brother, David, decides to make his sister the subject of a documentary for a class assignment, which threatens to reveal the unconventional career path Jordan's chosen in order to pay the bills.

Jordan's brother is real-life sibling, 19-year-old Avi, an alum of "Wet Hot American Summer" who's currently enrolled as a freshman at New York University. The experience seems to be a positive one, as the Sotter Brothers are currently collaborating on a screenplay that Ishai describes as being "about a conservative Jewish family vacationing in a place rife with spring-breakers."

Also screening at this fifth annual Tribeca Film Festival are "Saint of 9/11," Glen Holsten's documentary about Father Mychal Judge, the Brooklyn-born FDNY chaplain who died in the terror attacks; and the directorial debut of Bushwick native Rosie Perez, whose documentary is called "Yo Soy Boricua, pa' que tu lo sepa!" (I'm Boricua, just so you know!).

The Tribeca Film Festival runs April 25-May 7. Tickets can be purchased at the festival box office, 13-17 Light St. at Varick Street in Manhattan. For information about box office hours, film schedule, festival passes and ticket prices, visit the Web site www.tribecafilmfestival.org or call (866) 941-3378.

'Queen' of everything

In "The May Queen: Women on Life, Love, Work, and Pulling It All Together in Your 30s" editor Andrea Richesin has culled an eclectic collection of essays by a diverse array of women about what being "put together" means after 29 — in 2006.

On Wednesday, Richesin will read from "May Queen," along with Brooklynites Ayun Halliday, Ivy Meeropol and Heather Chaplin, in Cobble Hill.

One common trait among the contributors is their honesty — whether the topic is their experience with abortion, divorce, stripping or religion. Many of the authors are writers or per-

formers, so their approaches to overcoming obstacles and hardships while juggling family and/or careers can be as inspiring as they are creative. Many of the two-dozen stories are about how the authors accepted past mistakes, and mined their newly found wisdom to craft a rewarding future.

Meeropol writes about why she chose to film a documentary about her family living with the aftermath of the execution of her grandparents — Ethel and Julius Rosenberg — while Chaplin's essay addresses how her gender enhances — or hinders — her ability to be a journalist.

But there's lots of humor to be found here, too, as

in this Halliday excerpt: "Here is a random sampling of some things that happened [to me] between the ages of 30 and 40, but probably only because I had children: exposed breasts in public, excrement in purse, started 'zine, wound up in hospital, wound up in hospital again, book contract #1, met 90 percent of the people I would consider friends, lice."

Contributors to "The May Queen: Women on Life, Love, Work, and Pulling It All Together in Your 30s" (Tarcher/Penguin, \$14.95) will read from their essays at BookCourt (163 Court St. at Dean Street in Cobble Hill) on April 26 at 8 p.m. For more information, call (718) 875-3677.

— Lisa J. Curtis

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BROOKLYN

Neighborhood Dining Guide

This week: DEKALB AVENUE

Black Iris

228 DeKalb Ave. at Clermont Avenue, (718) 852-9600, (718) 852-5556 (Cash only) Entrees: \$7-\$17.
Since early 2002, Black Iris has been serving Middle Eastern cuisine that their menu boasts is the "Finest... in Fort Greene." The moodily lit dining area seats around 30, with exposed brick walls and banquettes hung with richly embroidered kilims. The takeout windows are arched openings onto a brightly lit kitchen, where the staff enjoys the same ethnic music as the diners. Customers are encouraged to bring their own wine or beer.

The moderately priced fare features classic Middle Eastern dishes like baba gannous, humus, spinach pie, red lentil soup and kebabs. A house specialty is the "chicken out," a medley of chicken breast, vegetables, almonds, raisins and rice wrapped in phyllo dough. Lamb chops, merguez sausage and roasted leg of lamb are also on the menu, and Moroccan specials are offered daily. For dessert, naturally there's baklava; or for a lighter treat, sample the "baobabs": a large slab of semolina cake redolent with honey and yogurt, and unadorned except for a sprinkling of powdered almonds. According to GO Brooklyn's Rebecca Magdal, it's perfect accompanied by a cup of Black Iris's authentic Turkish coffee, richly scented with cardamom. Free delivery available. Open daily for lunch and dinner.

Chez Oskar

211 DeKalb Ave. at Adelphi Street, (718) 852-6250, www.chezoskar.com, (AmEx, Disc, MC, Visa) Entrees: \$9-\$19.

Chez Oskar offers some of the best French bistro fare — with hints of the Caribbean — in Brooklyn. And what goes better with owner Denis Costa's delicious French staples than a bottle of wine from an affordable list? Whether you choose the grilled salmon (served with artichokes, snow peas and asparagus) or the lamb shank (served with caramelized onions and fennel potato gratin), the four-less chocolate cake is a perfect ending. Brunch is served weekends, from 11:30 am to 4:30 pm. Sidewalk cafe seats available, weather permitting. Open daily for lunch and dinner.

Lou Lou

222 DeKalb Ave. at Clermont Avenue, (718) 246-0633 (AmEx, MC, Visa) Entrees: \$13-\$19.

Lou Lou has a cozy French countryside atmosphere with rustic tables, exposed brick walls and a lovely garden. A signature dish from chef William Snell's menu is his seafood bouillabaisse in a coconut curry broth. Another option for starters, the Blue Hill Bouchot mussels, offers a choice of three sauces: Normandy cider and braised fennel; red curry with coconut milk and lime; or a Chardonnay white wine with garlic and tomatoes. Other specialties include the grilled rainbow trout with roasted potatoes and sautéed spinach in a champagne cream sauce; the grilled salmon with roasted vegetable grain and tomato vinaigrette; or the red wine-braised monkfish with fennel, roasted plum tomatoes and white bean ragout. A three-course, \$19 prix fixe menu is offered Sundays through Wednesdays. On Thursdays, get two entrees for the price of one, and Mondays are corkage-free. Open for dinner daily, and for brunch on the weekends, from 11 am to 3:30 pm.

Mo-Bay Restaurant

112 DeKalb Ave. at Ashland Place, (718) 246-2800, www.mobayrestaurant.com, Entrees: \$7.75-\$17.75.

If Caribbean, soul and vegetarian food are what you fancy, then Mo-Bay restaurant is the place to be. Mo-Bay's beach hut interior, fresh-cut flowers and reggae music give the place a cool, island vibe. Owner Sharon Barnes's popular dishes include the curry coconut salmon, lemongrass chicken and octopus stew. For vegetarians, there's the brown-stewed "chickens," curry "chickens," and "salmon" (made from soy protein). The dessert menu offers red velvet cake and Mo-Bay's famous "Tummy rum cake," vanilla cake soaked in three types of rum and served warm with vanilla ice cream — a slice of heaven, according to GO Brooklyn's Lisa Curtis. Daily luncheon specials. Open daily for lunch and dinner.

Red Bamboo

271 Adelphi St. at DeKalb Avenue, (718) 443-4806 (Cash only) Entrees: \$7.95-\$12.95.

★ = Full review available at

Brooklyn Papers .com

Abbreviation Key: AmEx= American Express, DC= Discover Card, MC= MasterCard, Visa= Visa Card



Inside Fort Greene's Mo-Bay restaurant.

The mock-meat invasion continues with Jason Wong's Red Bamboo, the newly opened sister to the vegetarian restaurant in the same name in Manhattan's West Village, which specializes in Caribbean and Soul food-style vegetarian dishes that taste like the real McCoy. Wong has big plans for his dining palace on the corner of DeKalb and Adelphi, where patio seating lets diners enjoy the street ambience of this trendy neighborhood. By May 15, says Wong, the space will boast two full bars, two stages, and an upstairs deck. Red Bamboo's Brooklyn hostess, Nikka Gaskin, raves about the Cajun "shrimp," saying that it "tastes just like real shrimp." So if you like Cajun food, and aren't a vegetarian, but want to party heartily while eating healthy, try Red Bamboo and maybe you'll never miss the meat. Their "soul chicken" is a registered trademark: Cajun-flavored soy chicken cutlet breaded with "panko" (Asian-style breadcrumbs) and served with a hot-spicy Vidalia dressing. There's also jerk "chicken" and buffalo barbecue "wings." Like the original Red Bamboo, there's an international twist to the cuisine: teriyaki "chicken," vegetable tempura, and Philly cheese "steak" can all be found on the menu. Many of the selections are vegan and the menu notes when milk or eggs are used, with a choice of dairy or non-dairy cheeses. You're in no danger of mistaking tasteless alfalfa sprouts in this healthy veggie bar and lounge. Currently open Thursday through Sunday for lunch and dinner, with a brunch menu on weekends.

Rice

166 DeKalb Ave. at Cumberland Street, (718) 858-2700, (Cash only) Entrees: \$5-\$15.
The newest of four Rice locations owned by David Selig and Peter Lawrence, the restaurant has a warm, understated interior dining room seating around 30. Banquettes with tufted-covered cushions, out-of-the-decor and large picture windows give a bright and airy, informal feel to the space. True to its name, Rice's menu boasts a variety of specialty rices, such as green rice mixed with clams, pan-fried spinach, or Thai black rice steamed in coconut milk. The fare is an eclectic mix of influences including Jamaican, Lebanese and Thai, not to mention great families. Vegetarian bistro dishes, curries and steaks are offered alongside chicken, beef and shrimp specialties. According to Gabrielle Blecher, manager at the DUMBO location, the chicken kebabs, served with Lebanese rice, steamed vegetables and pita, is one of the most popular entrees, but the Vietnamese lemongrass chicken salad has been turning heads, too. Seasonal fresh juices, such as watermelon or apple-lemon-ginger, are available, and there's terrace seating in warm weather. Open daily for lunch and dinner and for brunch on weekends, from 10 am to 4 pm. Free local delivery for orders over \$10.

Two Steps Down

240 DeKalb Ave. at Vanderbilt Avenue, (718) 399-2020, (MC, Visa) Entrees: \$13.95-\$29.95.

Opened in 1969, owner Yvette Mayo's exquisite seafood restaurant may well be why other fine restaurants have flocked to Fort Greene. This cozy, bi-level eatery can seat up to 75, between the ground floor and the upstairs. Inside, you'll find exposed brick walls adorned with lots of artwork and a renovated upstairs lounge with a full bar and fireplace. And the food? The Louisiana gumbo, chicken salad, shrimp, scallops and oysters along with corn and okra, and it is served with yellow rice and a garden salad. The blackened medley combines spiced and seared salmon, catfish and tuna, topped with a black bean and corn salsa. Medallions can try the filet mignon with mushrooms. Desserts include sweet potato cake with cinnamon gelato, and the signature dessert, "according to manager Renee Mayo, is the bread pudding with bourbon sauce. Happy hour with martinis specials every Thursday, from 5 pm to 7 pm. Sundays there's a brunch special, with a choice of breakfast entree and side, plus cocktail or juice, and coffee or tea for \$10.95; and starting in May, a three-course, \$19.95 prix fixe Sunday brunch will be offered. Open Thursday through Sunday for dinner, and from 11:30 am to 3:30 pm for Sunday brunch. Closed Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

Editor's note: These are a sampling of restaurants in the neighborhood. The list rotates, and it is not comprehensive. For more restaurants, go to www.brooklynpapers.com on the Web. If your restaurant is not listed and you would like it to be, please contact GO Brooklyn Editor Lisa Curtis via email at Curtis@BrooklynPapers.com.

Blue 'Woon'

Williamsburg restaurant's interior is out of this world; but food is utter lunar-cy

By Tina Barry
For The Brooklyn Papers

I took more than a year for Bener Bilgin, the owner of My Moon in Williamsburg, to gut the boiler room of an old factory and transform the neglected space into the performance venue and eatery he envisioned.

His hard work created a showplace with a towering ceiling, arched brick walls and huge banquettes cleverly fashioned from the former plant's water tanks.

Above the long bar hovers a sculpture that resembles Emma Thompson descending from the heavens in Tony Kushner's

"Angels in America." Like so many places in the neighborhood, the walls serve as a gallery space for local artists. When I visited, an exhibition of paintings, strongly influenced by Picasso's early works, hung about the room. (A new display goes up every six weeks.)

After a "Pomellati" (Absolut citron and fruit juices), the dark, multi-leveled space can seem as campy as it is dramatic, like a hangout for creative types as envisioned by a set designer.

Artists and others may be in attendance on Wednesday when a live belly dancer entertains; they may show up on Fridays for jazz sessions, or on Saturdays when a DJ spins '80s rock or house music, but on a recent Tuesday evening, only a few tables in the 246-seat dining room were filled.

The nearly empty restaurant may be due in part to a chef just getting his bearings in the kitchen. Manny Marin, who cooked for Palio in Manhattan, took over the kitchen in early March. He offers an eclectic mix of Spanish, Turkish and Mediterranean meze and tapas — little plates meant to be shared — as well as a small selection of entrees. The menu makes a good read: garlic shrimp in white wine; grilled octopus with chopped red onions in a sherry vinegar dressing; "boreks," the phyllo dough turnovers filled with feta cheese; and other dishes that promise a lively dining experience. However, much of the pleasure lies on the page.

There were a few highlights: a briny seafood bisque; rare shrimp and tuna over a salad with a tart, lemony



Safe bet: (Top) While My Moon's menu can be a hit-or-miss affair, the kebab medley of grilled tuna and shrimp over mixed greens and feta cheese is a winner. (Above) At the bar, artists Tunja Bolayir (left) and Eilif Ockoe take seats in front of the angel they created.

dressings; and a silky cream brulee tinged with orange. But too many overcooked, improbably under-seasoned dishes made for a disappointing meal.

Pretty green zucchini patties, one of the hot meze offerings, looked lovely drizzled with garlic yogurt dip; however, they were bland and soft, and the garlic in the sauce was barely noticeable.

After such a dismal beginning, briny mussels, chunks of sweet shrimp and lobster in a rich seafood bisque came as a surprise.

I understand why Marin thought sliced, toasted almonds in the "tuna stack," one of the cold meze, would make an intriguing addition. A few nuts would have added an interesting crunch

to the soft raw fish, but someone in the kitchen went overboard, layering the mound's center with so many almonds that munching became labor intensive. Frizzled slivers of beets sprinkled over the fish were chewier and a little sweeter than expected, but pleasant. And dabs of roasted beet vinaigrette cried out for salt.

Nothing was needed to improve the flavor of grape leaves filled with rice and tiny cubes of apricots that lent a welcome note of sweetness. Too bad they were left on the stove until the grain went from tender to soggy.

A skewer of sweet shrimp and meaty tuna with delectable, chargrilled edges redeemed the disappointing grape leaves. A pile of mixed greens in a strong lemony dressing, which were served with the kebab, complemented the fish's smoky taste.

What should be the restaurant's signature dish, "conscious with 10 ingredients," turned out to be the biggest disappointment of the evening. The waiter came to the table carrying an elaborately engraved metal tray with a conical lid. With some fanfare, he lifted the tagine's top, revealing a small serving of pulled cosmos.

"It must taste better than it looks," I thought. Not so. The lamb was cut into such tiny pieces I could barely taste it; the vegetables were also diced into cubes so minute that I'd need the team from "C.S.I." to detect them. As far as spicing goes, that, too, was kept on the understated side.

There were no Middle Eastern notes in the small dessert, just the usual bistro-style suspects: cream brulee, chocolate mousse and sorbet. I couldn't find fault with the citrus-infused cream and the mousse was serviceable. Neither was memorable.

I suspect My Moon will be at its peak on warm spring days and summer months, when its doors open onto a breezy, secluded courtyard lined with plants. A change in ambience may soften the space, but the kitchen needs more than a shift in mood to turn out decent fare.

Sweet smell of success

There's only one disadvantage to eating in a Korean restaurant: afterwards, everyone can tell where you've dined. While grilling your own meat at the table is a wonderful way to enjoy the cuisine, those fumes can stick with you long after the check's been paid. Shul Kim (pictured on the right), the owner of Williamsburg's Dokkebi (means "devil" or "ghost" in Korean), has found a way for you to remain sweet-smelling. At each table, he's installed grills specially designed to suck the smoke out of the air.

"They really work," says Shul. "Shul and his chefs 'Mr. Park' and 'Mrs. Kim' (both have worked in Manhattan's 36 Bar & BBQ and Seoul Garden) developed the menu. Entrees focus on high-quality provisions such as Angus beef, not inferior ingredients with lots of sides, the way some other Korean restaurants serve their meals, says Shul.

"People have criticized me for not including side dishes in the price of the en-

tries," he says, "but I'd rather not scrimp on the mains just to load diners up on extras. And my prices are about 20 percent cheaper because of it." Kimchi (spicy pickled cabbage) and other "ban chan" (side dishes) are available a la carte.

In the modern, brick-walled, 100-seat dining room, which opened in November, patrons can enjoy the grilled selection, or other Asian specialties such as "shabu-shabu" (raw meat and vegetables cooked at the table in hot broth) and "bibim bob" (rice mixed with vegetables and beef).

To end the meal, there are 12 gelatos, including red bean, ginger, fig and cinnamon, and three fruit sorbets.

Dokkebi (199 Grand St. between Bedford and Driggs avenues in Williamsburg) accepts American Express, MasterCard and Visa. Entrees: \$8-\$20. The restaurant serves lunch and dinner daily. For reservations, call (718) 782-1424.

—Tina Barry

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Everyday people

Rarely seen films by Japanese director Mikio Naruse get retrospective in Fort Greene

By Kevin Filipiski
for The Brooklyn Papers

Barely known hereabouts — especially compared with giants like his compatriots Yasujiro Ozu, Masaki Kobayashi and Akira Kurosawa — is Japanese director Mikio Naruse.

Naruse was also a giant who made films with a grace and humility of their own; although superficially similar to Ozu — whose career was also filled with domestic dramas that more often than not centered on very few principal characters and their quotidian lives — Naruse did not go in for big spectacles or the costume dramas that often marked the work of Kurosawa and Kenji Mizoguchi.

Now, following a Film Forum retrospective last fall honoring the 100th anniversary of his birth — Naruse died in 1969 — BAMcinematek is the lone Brooklyn venue for a series running April 27-May 10.

"The Films of Mikio Naruse: The Unknown Japanese Master," which includes several newly struck, newly subtitled prints from the Japan Foundation, is a great opportunity to discover this humane artist whose explorations of ordinary people can be spoken of in the same breath as the heartrending profundity of that ultimate Japanese master Ozu.

Opening the series April 27 is "Wife Be Like a Rose" which Naruse shot in 1935. The first sound film made in Japan to be released in North America, "Wife" is a gently funny look at a young woman's attempts to bring her separated parents back together.

Just like Ozu, who titled several films similarly — i.e., "Late Spring," "Early Summer" or "An Autumn Afternoon," Naruse also has a very particular poetry informing the titles of many of his films. Most obvious are the trio of "Floating Clouds" (1955), "Summer Clouds" (1958) and "Scattered Clouds" (1967).

But their similarity begins and ends with their titles. All made during Naruse's late period — "Scattered Clouds" was Naruse's final film — these films are each epic portraits of quite specific Japanese milieus.

"Floating Clouds" (May 6) is a surprisingly erotic, yet ultimately painful, tragedy about a couple seeking to rekindle an old romance. "Summer Clouds" (May 5), Naruse's first film shot both in color and in the widescreen format, was the director's initial portrayal of life in the Japanese countryside as a female farmer (and widow) has an affair with a Tokyo-based reporter.



CINEMA

"The Films of Mikio Naruse: The Unknown Japanese Master" will be shown from April 27 to May 10 at the BAMcinematek, 30 Lafayette Ave., at Ashland Place in Fort Greene. Admission is \$10 for adults, \$7 for students and seniors. For a complete film schedule, call (718) 636-4100 or visit the Web site, www.bam.org.

As for "Scattered Clouds" (May 10), its story of a pregnant woman — widowed by a car wreck, who rebuffs financial assistance from the man who caused the accident — is a wonderfully fitting final testament from the most generous humane of all Japanese directors. One of the director's very own favorites, "Sound of the Mountain" (April 28), develops a most affectionate relationship between an unhappy wife and her kind father-in-law. After the

6:50 pm screening, author Philip Lopate will host a Q&A and sign copies of his new book, "American Movie Critics: An Anthology from the Silents Until Now."

Other Naruse series highlights include films featuring typically Narusian (to coin a word) heroines, all of whose lives are studied in a fascinatingly somber way. "Mother" (April 30) stars the great Japanese actress Kinuyo Tanaka (seen in several Ozu and Mizoguchi works) as a widow with three children trying to keep her late husband's dry-cleaning business. Another feminist masterpiece, "Late Chrysanthemum" (May 4), is an incisive character study of a quartet of retired geishas.

Perhaps Naruse's most notable film is 1969's "When a Woman Ascends the Stairs" (May 7). As always in Naruse's work, merely recounting the plot makes it sound like a merely melodramatic soap opera, but here it goes anyway: a young widow, named "Mama," who works as a nightclub hostess, dreams of opening her own club at the same time as she fends off

Eyes on Naruse: Part of the Mikio Naruse retrospective at BAMcinematek, "Repeat" (left) will be screened on April 29 and "When a Woman Ascends the Stairs" (above) on May 7.

various suitors. That's it, really, but the director has miraculously taken this seemingly superficial story and characters and has carefully and gradually insinuated them into the viewer's very consciousness so that, by the time this extraordinarily haunting film comes to an end, the viewer feels he's spent two blissful hours with close friends whom he doesn't want to leave.

Shot in sparkling, black and white Tohoshoku (the Japanese variation of Cinemascope), "When a Woman Ascends the Stairs" abounds with many telling touches that bespeak a master director at work, including a quite judicious use of voiceover, which gives important and strategic insights into Mama's mindset, and Toshirô Mayuzumi's spare (and sparingly used) musical score, whose jaunty melancholy recalls Nino Rota's best scores for the films of Federico Fellini.

"When a Woman Ascends the Stairs" is the perfect introduction to the worldly art of Mikio Naruse, as are any of the other dozen films being shown at BAM.

BOOKS

Rich Cohen will read from his book "Sweet and Low" (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, \$25) on June 27 at 6:30 pm at the Brooklyn Public Library's Brooklyn Heights branch (280 Cadman Plaza West at Tillary Street). The book can be ordered here: Barnes & Noble in Brooklyn Heights (106 Court St. at State Street, (718) 246-4996) or Barnes & Noble in Park Slope (267 Seventh Ave. at Sixth Street, (718) 832-9066).

lords of Flatbush, when Flatbush was the Scarsdale of New York City.

"That little difference — my father's parents spoke Yiddish while my mother's parents were fully assimilated — was everything in Brooklyn in those days," Cohen said. "And a lot of what happened in the book is a result of that."

And therein lies another great metaphor. Eisenstadt's son, Marvin, for example, would go on to run the factory, but he could never be Ben — the up-from-the-bootstraps, first-generation patriarch — because he grew up in privilege.

"It's like our entire country, on some level," Cohen said. "Ben could not raise a son like Ben because our entire country's ethos is that there's always someone hungrier — another Ben, most likely a new immigrant — to take it away from us because we're not fighting, innovating, growing like Ben did."

The factory that makes Sweet N Low — Cumberland Packing Company — still churns out millions of the bright-pink packets every year (and, despite a decline in sales, is actively courted by city officials to keep its 400 or so jobs in Brooklyn).

And Eisenstadt's other great legacy, Maimonides Medical Center, still has a Ben and Betty Eisenstadt Pavilion to honor his philanthropic work at the hospital late in his life. "Ben was a great man who shaped the Brooklyn we live in today," Cohen said. "Through it all — the disinheritance, the mob scandal, the [mental illness], I do not dislike these people. I see the good in all of them."

SWEET...

Continued from page 1

"Sweet and Low" is not just a family memoir — despite its saccharine subtitle, "A Family Story." It is much bigger than that — a story of the rise and fall of a great company, a history of America's obsession with weight and, at bottom, a metaphor for the borough itself.

"I originally wanted to subtitle it, 'A Brooklyn Gothic,' which it is, but the publisher didn't think it was universal enough," Cohen said.

But his instincts were right. This book — indeed, this city — could be set nowhere else but here.

The key players are all from Brooklyn — and are all touched by the borough's peculiar neurosis: the feeling that we are always second best to Manhattan. "My father always said that



The extended Eisenstadt-Cohen family. The author, Rich Cohen, is kneeling in the front row next to his grandfather, the inventor of Sweet N Low, Ben Eisenstadt.

when he writes his memoir, he'll call it, 'I Never Made Manhattan,'" Cohen said. "That longing drives the whole story."

That neurosis also drove Eisenstadt and his customers. "The money and the prod-

uct and the people all come from Brooklyn," Cohen writes, "but it's more than that. It's the longing of the borough, the collective energy of the millions of immigrants who flooded Brooklyn at the begin-

ning of the 20th century. The diet craze that turned Sweet N Low into a household name is a concrete manifestation of that longing. Diet cola, the bathroom scale, Sweet N Low — it all comes from Brooklyn, the cradle of a new culture, the culture of the body, with its quest for complete freedom: freedom from history, freedom from exclusion, freedom from fat. It's the longing that created the fortune [that] destroyed my family."

It's a family that Brooklynites of a certain age will recognize right away. Cohen's father, Herb, was a first-generation American, born in Bensonhurst when that neighborhood was a Jewish ghetto. Cohen's mother, Betty Eisenstadt, was second-generation; the Eisenstadts were

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100 Wine Tips

CLOSEOUTS: the Good, the Bad and the Terrible!

By Darrin Siegfried

HERE ARE A FEW TIPS ON HOW TO SAVE MONEY AND NOT GET BURNED WHEN YOU ARE BUYING WINE!

There are times when our suppliers come to me with offers that are almost too good to be true. There just isn't enough room in their warehouse, and a few containers of wine are coming in. They have to move the current stock out, and are willing to sell a big "dump" for a bargain price. The current vintage is in, and they still have a good amount of the last one and, while it may be drinking better than the "new" one, they will offer it to me cheaply if I take everything that they have left. They bought too much of a wine that just isn't selling, for whatever reason, and are willing to recoup their cost, just to get out from under it. I'll taste the wines (I'm still amazed that there are so many liquor shops whose owners don't taste before they buy! Can you imagine buying a jacket without trying it on?) and, if the deal is really worth it, I'll take the wine in and pass the savings along to my customers at Red White & Bubbly. I've got fifty cases on hand that I want to sell quickly, and the best way to do that is to sell it at a bargain price. Since my customers know from experience that these are delicious wines and really are being sold at a big discount, they tend to sell out quickly!

Some of the bigger retail shops, especially in Manhattan, buy these deals too, but put the wines out for their full price. I can't tell you how many times I've heard "so-and-so has this same wine for \$6 more than you're selling it for. Come on now! Can't they make a fair profit and still give their loyal customers a break, too? I know that I can, and I do! Perhaps that's the difference between business and greed."

A few of the biggest wholesalers offer what they call "closeout" every month, and these are the ones I avoid. These are often wines that have been standing around in their warehouses so long that they've gone bad. Old, spoiled wine, no matter how cheap, is never a bargain! I've seen these offerings: three-year old Beaujolais Nouveau for 50 cents a bottle, the lists go on and on, filled with bad wines. Shop that know little about wine buy this plunk up, sell it cheaply and think they're making money. My theory is if someone buys a bottle like this, why would they ever trust you with another purchase?

There are three Closeouts that I have in Red White & Bubbly right now that I'd like to tell you about. These are terrific wines, perfect for drinking this time of year, which you can buy at a considerable savings!

Monarch, Pinot Grigio \$9.95. We sold cases and cases of this wine for \$14, and in Manhattan it sold for even more. This is a classic Pinot Grigio: nicely aromatic without being heavy or "perfumy", smooth and slightly rich on the tongue with subtle flavors of pears, apples and peaches. This wine is a pleasure to drink by itself or with almost any dish that calls for white wine. Springtime is here, and the weather is just right for sipping a white wine like this. Buy it now: there's not much left at this price, and there's not a better Pinot Grigio deal in town!

Michel Fonne, Pinot Blanc, Cuvée Réserve \$11.95. Our good friend Daniel Johnson brought this wine to us, and we bought enough to bring the price way down! You can find it selling in Manhattan for \$19, and you can enjoy it by the glass at some well-known, wonderful restaurants, but the smart money says to buy it here at Red White & Bubbly at this bargain price! Rich and smooth in the mouth, this delicious wine has remarkable balance, soft fresh fruit flavors, bright, crisp acidity and a long, lingering finish. "This goes with anything," while I will do just that, and do it very well!

Dom, De la Haute Borne, Vouvray, Sec \$12.95. Terrific wine, Closeout price! Vouvray, one of the great white wines from the Loire Valley, is a perfect springtime sipper, but this one is so much more "serious" than just that! Currently priced by the glass at some of the city's most prestigious restaurants, this 100% Organic white has captivating, wonderful hints of cardamom, quince, acacia and honey on the nose. Richer than most Vouvrays, with flavors of ripe peach, Golden Delicious apple, citrus and minerals, this is the wine I'm drinking right now!

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Cuckoo for Kiku

Amidst the dropping cherry blossom petals at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, local pop-rock band Gujin a Go-Go will drop its latest album, "Go Go Boot Camp" on April 29.

Although the group's music grooves with '60s-style go-go rhythms, the 11-member band will be an utterly contemporary addition to the Garden's annual cherry blossom festival line-up, "Sakura Matsuri," which predominantly showcases centuries-old Japanese art and culture.

When DUMBO fashion designer Petra Hanson isn't at her day job, the 6-foot-tall former model transforms herself into the platinum-haired Kiku Kimonoi, lead singer of Gujin a Go-Go.

Kimono-fied Go Brooklyn that she is designing a cherry blossom-inspired costume for the festival, but like a tightlipped geisha, the coquettish vocalist would only reveal that it will be '60s-inspired and fun.

The designer-musician used to live in Tokyo and now writes and sings in both "Japanese, English and Japish — we try

not to alienate anyone." But her kitschy, mod costumes, kooky, pun-ridden lyrics and choreographed dance moves (performed along with the "twins" — both dubbed Anne May Smith) all transcend translation: anyone can see they're about having a good time and getting the audience's go-go bodies twichin'.

Even the band's name, "Gujin," which means "foreign barbarian," reveals their infectious, self-deprecating humor, which caught the attention of "Beavis and Butt-head" director Mike Seve. (He not only produced their new Skebe Music CD — which translates as Slezazy Music, he co-wrote three of its songs.)

"Our music is fresh and positive and there's not a lot of that out there," says Kimono-fied. "It's something different from an entertainment angle — it's an experience, a multicultural experience. We're the arty band with a capital P."

Gajin a Go-Go performs on the Brooklyn Botanic Garden's Cherry Esplanade Stage at 3:30 pm on April 29,

as part of "Sakura Matsuri." The festival takes place, rain or shine, throughout the garden (900 Washington Ave. at Eastern Parkway in Prospect Heights) on April 29 and 30, from 10 am to 6 pm. All activities are free with garden



admission: \$5 adults, \$3 seniors and students with ID, free for children under age 16. For a schedule of events, call the hotline at (718) 623-7333 or visit the Web site, www.bbg.org.

—Lisa J. Curtis

BROOKLYN Nightlife

Compiled by Chiara V. Cavan

Amarachi Lounge

325 Franklin Ave. at Clifton Place in Bedford-Stuyvesant, (646) 641-4510, www.amarachilounge.com

Saturday: The Weekend Warriors, 8 pm, \$10 food/drink minimum. April 28: The Weekend Warriors, 8 pm, \$10 food/drink minimum. April 29: The Weekend Warriors, 8 pm, \$10 food/drink minimum.

Any Way Cafe

1602 Grandwood Road at East 16th Street in Sheepshead Bay, (718) 534-0888, www.anywaycafe.com

Tuesday: Jazzy funk with Karin Okada and guests, 9 pm, FREE.

BAM Cafe

311 Lafayette Ave. at Inland Place in Fort Greene, (718) 634-1001, www.bamcafe.com

April 22: Julian Fialkow, 10 pm, \$10 food/drink minimum. April 28: The Weekend Warriors, 8 pm, \$10 food/drink minimum. April 29: The Weekend Warriors, 8 pm, \$10 food/drink minimum.

Bar 4

444 Greenwich Ave. at 15th Street in Park Slope, (718) 832-9800

April 22: Jon Harrison, 8 pm, 10 pm, \$5 (includes both sets).

Barbes

376 Ninth St. at Sixth Avenue in Park Slope, (718) 865-9177, www.barbesbrooklyn.com

Tuesday: Steve Soud, 9 pm, \$5, Wed: Steve Soud, 9 pm, \$5, Thursday: Steve Soud, 9 pm, \$5, Friday: Steve Soud, 9 pm, \$5, Saturday: Steve Soud, 9 pm, \$5, Sunday: Steve Soud, 9 pm, \$5.

Black Betty

366 Metropolitan Ave. at Kensington Street in Williamsburg, (718) 599-0243, www.blackbetty.com

Saturday: DJ's Vah Supreme and Con-vent, 11 pm, FREE. Sunday: DJ's Vah Supreme and Con-vent, 11 pm, FREE.

Cafe Steinhof

422 Seventh Ave. at 14th Street in Park Slope, (718) 309-7776, www.cafesteinhof.com

April 28: River Alexander & His Mad Jazz Hatens, 10:30 pm, FREE.

Cattyshack

249 Fourth Ave. at Carroll Street in Park Slope, (718) 230-5140, www.cattyshack.com

Saturday: DJ's David Raymond & BK Beats, 10 pm, \$5, Sunday: DJ's David Raymond & BK Beats, 10 pm, \$5.

Center for Improvisational Music

295 Douglas St. at Third Avenue in Park Slope, (718) 637-0882, www.centerforimprovisationalmusic.com

April 22: The Center for Improvisational Music, 8 pm, \$5, April 28: The Center for Improvisational Music, 8 pm, \$5, April 29: The Center for Improvisational Music, 8 pm, \$5.

Chocolate Monkey

329 Flatbush Ave. at Seventh Avenue in Park Slope, (718) 789-7896

Saturday: DJ's David Raymond & BK Beats, 10 pm, \$5, Sunday: DJ's David Raymond & BK Beats, 10 pm, \$5.

Crossroads Cafe

285 G5 Grand Ave. at Atlantic Avenue in Clinton Hill, (718) 922-1852, www.crossroadscafe.com

Wednesday: Jazz series with Todd Hackett and friends, 8 pm, \$10 donation suggested.

Crossroads Saloon

2079 Conny Island Ave. at Kings Highway in Sheepshead Bay, (718) 239-9593

Saturday and Friday: Karaoke, 9 pm, FREE.

Le Dakar Cafe

265 G5 Grand Ave. at Atlantic Avenue in Clinton Hill, (718) 988-8900, www.ledekarcafe.com

Monday: Karaoke, last member in "The Lion King," sing live, 8 pm, \$5, Wednesday: Karaoke, sing live, 8 pm, \$5, Thursday: Karaoke, sing live, 8 pm, \$5.

Europa Night Club

98 Meuse Ave. at Manhattan Avenue in Greenpoint, (718) 383-5723, www.europacafe.com

Saturday: "MP Dance Party," 10 pm, FREE, April 22: "MP Dance Party," 10 pm, \$15, April 28: "MP Dance Party," 10 pm, \$15, April 29: "MP Dance Party," 10 pm, \$15.

Five Spot

619 Manhattan Ave. at Washington Avenue in Clinton Hill, (718) 852-0202, www.fivespot.com

Monday: Open house hosted by DJ Cops, 8 pm, FREE, Tuesday: DJ's David Raymond & BK Beats, 10 pm, \$5, Wednesday: DJ's David Raymond & BK Beats, 10 pm, \$5, Thursday: DJ's David Raymond & BK Beats, 10 pm, \$5, Friday: DJ's David Raymond & BK Beats, 10 pm, \$5, Saturday: DJ's David Raymond & BK Beats, 10 pm, \$5, Sunday: DJ's David Raymond & BK Beats, 10 pm, \$5.

Hope and Anchor

351 Var Court St. at West Street in Park Slope, (718) 237-0206

Saturday: Karaoke, 10 pm, \$10, Sunday: Karaoke, 10 pm, \$10.

Jazz 966

966 Fulton St. at Cambridge Place in Clinton Hill, (718) 852-0202

Friday: Live jazz, 8 pm, \$5 and \$15 donation, April 28: Jazz, 8 pm, \$5 and \$15 donation, April 29: Jazz, 8 pm, \$5 and \$15 donation.

The Jazz Spot

179 Manhattan Ave. at East Street in Bedford-Stuyvesant, (718) 453-7676

Monday: Jam session, 8 pm, \$15, April 22: Jam session, 8 pm, \$15, April 28: Jam session, 8 pm, \$15, April 29: Jam session, 8 pm, \$15.

Kili Bar-Cafe

81 Hoyt St. at Second Street in Boerum Hill, (718) 488-5777, www.kilibar.com

Tuesday: Boerum Ambiance Night featuring live music with Peter Davenport, 9 pm, FREE.

Les Baboues

7803 Third Ave. at 78th Street in Bay Ridge, (718) 833-7000

Saturday and Friday: Belly dancer Shalimar, 8 pm, FREE.

The Lucky Cat

245 Grand St. at Robbing Street in Williamsburg, (718) 782-6507, www.theluckycat.com

Saturday: Karaoke, 10 pm, \$10, Sunday: Karaoke, 10 pm, \$10.

Laila Lounge

1113 Seventh St. at Atlantic Avenue in Williamsburg, (718) 488-6791, www.lailalounge.com

Monday: Karaoke with the Com-Fed Lounge, 10 pm, FREE, Tuesday: Karaoke with the Com-Fed Lounge, 10 pm, FREE, Wednesday: Karaoke with the Com-Fed Lounge, 10 pm, FREE, Thursday: Karaoke with the Com-Fed Lounge, 10 pm, FREE, Friday: Karaoke with the Com-Fed Lounge, 10 pm, FREE, Saturday: Karaoke with the Com-Fed Lounge, 10 pm, FREE, Sunday: Karaoke with the Com-Fed Lounge, 10 pm, FREE.

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245 Grand St. at Robbing Street in Williamsburg, (718) 782-6507, www.theluckycat.com

Saturday: Karaoke, 10 pm, \$10, Sunday: Karaoke, 10 pm, \$10.

Sista's Place

456 Montross Ave. at Jefferson Avenue in Bedford-Stuyvesant, (718) 852-0202, www.sistasplace.org

April 22: Karaoke, 10 pm, \$10, April 28: Karaoke, 10 pm, \$10, April 29: Karaoke, 10 pm, \$10.

Southpaw

125 First Ave. at 12th Street in Park Slope, (718) 230-0236, www.southpaw.com

April 22: A Very Special Night with The Ambulance Orchestra, 8 pm, \$10, April 28: A Very Special Night with The Ambulance Orchestra, 8 pm, \$10, April 29: A Very Special Night with The Ambulance Orchestra, 8 pm, \$10.

Stain

766 Grand St. at Humboldt Street in Williamsburg, (718) 387-7840, www.stain.com

Monday: "Paint Station," 5 pm (often sponsored by the art dept. of Nelsons), 8 pm, FREE, Tuesday: "Paint Station," 5 pm, FREE, Wednesday: "Paint Station," 5 pm, FREE, Thursday: "Paint Station," 5 pm, FREE, Friday: "Paint Station," 5 pm, FREE, Saturday: "Paint Station," 5 pm, FREE, Sunday: "Paint Station," 5 pm, FREE.

Tea Lounge

437 Union St. at 10th Street in Park Slope, (718) 789-2762, www.tealounge.com

April 28: Karaoke, 10 pm, \$10, April 29: Karaoke, 10 pm, \$10.

Trash Bar

266 Grand St. at Seventh Avenue in Williamsburg, (718) 599-1000, www.trashbar.com

April 22: Karaoke, 10 pm, \$10, April 28: Karaoke, 10 pm, \$10, April 29: Karaoke, 10 pm, \$10.

Two Boots Brooklyn

514 Second St. at Seventh Avenue in Park Slope, (718) 499-3253, www.twobootsbklyn.com

April 22: The DJ's of Brooklyn, 10 pm, \$10, April 28: The DJ's of Brooklyn, 10 pm, \$10, April 29: The DJ's of Brooklyn, 10 pm, \$10.

Vox Pop

1022 Convent Ave. at Bedford Street in Bedford-Stuyvesant, (718) 982-0084, www.voxpop.net

Saturday: Open mic, 7:30 pm, FREE with 2 drink minimum, April 28: Open mic, 7:30 pm, \$5, Sunday: Open mic, 7:30 pm, \$5.

Waterfront Ale House

135 Atlantic Ave. at Clinton Street in Brooklyn Heights, (718) 522-3294, www.waterfrontalehouse.com

April 22: Karaoke, 10 pm, \$10, April 28: Karaoke, 10 pm, \$10, April 29: Karaoke, 10 pm, \$10.

The Wicked Monk

8415 Fifth Ave. at 84th Street in Bay Ridge, (718) 921-0601, www.thewickedmonk.com

April 22: Karaoke, 10 pm, \$10, April 28: Karaoke, 10 pm, \$10, April 29: Karaoke, 10 pm, \$10.

Zebulon

208 Wythe Ave. at Metropolitan Avenue in Williamsburg, (718) 218-4934, www.zebulon.com

April 22: Karaoke, 10 pm, \$10, April 28: Karaoke, 10 pm, \$10, April 29: Karaoke, 10 pm, \$10.

Pete's Candy Store

709 Lorimer St. at Richardson Street in Williamsburg, (718) 382-3700, www.petescandystore.com

Sunday: Open mic, 8 pm, \$10, April 22: Karaoke, 10 pm, \$10, April 28: Karaoke, 10 pm, \$10, April 29: Karaoke, 10 pm, \$10.

Parlor Jazz

119 Manhattan Ave. at West Street in Clinton Hill, (718) 855-1981, www.parlorjazz.com

April 22: Karaoke, 10 pm, \$10, April 28: Karaoke, 10 pm, \$10, April 29: Karaoke, 10 pm, \$10.

Pete's Candy Store

709 Lorimer St. at Richardson Street in Williamsburg, (718) 382-3700, www.petescandystore.com

Sunday: Open mic, 8 pm, \$10, April 22: Karaoke, 10 pm, \$10, April 28: Karaoke, 10 pm, \$10, April 29: Karaoke, 10 pm, \$10.

Talk to Us...

To list your events in Brooklyn Nightlife, please give us as much notice as possible. Include name of venue, address with cross street, phone number for the public to call. With address, date, time and admission or ticket price. Send us the address and phone number of the venue. We will post the information on our Web site and in our magazine. We will not be responsible for any information that is not correct or for any information that is not posted. We will not be responsible for any information that is not posted. We will not be responsible for any information that is not posted.

SUNDAY - April 23

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MONDAY - April 24

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TUESDAY - April 25

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THURSDAY - April 27

| TW | | CV | | 9:00am | 9:30am | 10:00am | 10:30am | 11:00am | 11:30am | 12:00pm | 12:30pm | 1:00pm | 1:30pm | 2:00pm | 2:30pm | 3:00pm | 3:30pm | 4:00pm | 4:30pm | 5:00pm | 5:30pm | 6:00pm | 6:30pm | 7:00pm | 7:30pm | 8:00pm | 8:30pm | 9:00pm | 9:30pm | 10:00pm | 10:30pm | 11:00pm | 11:30pm | 12:00pm | 12:30am | 1:00-6:00am | |
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| 34 | 67 | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special |
| 35 | 68 | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special |
| 56 | 69 | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special |
| 57 | 70 | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special |
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| | | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special |
| | | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special |
| | | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | | | | | |

FRIDAY - April 28

| TW | CV | 9:00am | 9:30am | 10:00am | 10:30am | 11:00am | 11:30am | 12:00pm | 12:30pm | 1:00pm | 1:30pm | 2:00pm | 2:30pm | 3:00pm | 3:30pm | 4:00pm | 4:30pm | 5:00pm | 5:30pm | 6:00pm | 6:30pm | 7:00pm | 7:30pm | 8:00pm | 8:30pm | 9:00pm | 9:30pm | 10:00pm | 10:30pm | 11:00pm | 11:30pm | 12:00am | 12:30am | 1:00-6:00am | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| 34 | 67 | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Next Level | Special | Special | Special | Next Level | Community Calendar | Special | Special | Crop & D'ish | Money & Eaten | Money & Eaten | Community Calendar | Community Calendar | Community Calendar | Community Calendar | Community Calendar | Community Calendar | Community Calendar | Community Calendar | Community Calendar | Community Calendar | Community Calendar | Community Calendar | Community Calendar | Community Calendar | Community Calendar | Community Calendar | Community Calendar | Community Calendar | Community Calendar | Community Calendar | Community Calendar | Community Calendar | Community Calendar | Community Calendar | Community Calendar | Community Calendar | Community Calendar | Community Calendar | Community Calendar | Community Calendar | Community Calendar | Community Calendar | Community Calendar | Community Calendar | Community Calendar | Community Calendar 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| | | 34 | 67 | Q&A For Treatment | SHS | Items of Art | NVH Headlines | Spring and Summer Exhibitions | Initiator | Chemistry Department |
| | | 35 | 68 | Portrait & Sketch | Nearly Victims | Black Market After Hours | Hobbies/ Hobbies Bazaar | Relationship Department | New Pop Music | Chemistry Department |
| | | 56 | 69 | Chemistry Department | Chemistry Department | Chemistry Department | Chemistry Department | Chemistry Department | Chemistry Department | Chemistry Department |
| | | 57 | 70 | Chemistry Department | Chemistry Department | Chemistry Department | Chemistry Department | Chemistry Department | Chemistry Department | Chemistry Department |

SATURDAY - April 29

| TW | CV | 9:00am | 9:30am | 10:00am | 10:30am | 11:00am | 11:30am | 12:00pm | 12:30pm | 1:00pm | 1:30pm | 2:00pm | 2:30pm | 3:00pm | 3:30pm | 4:00pm | 4:30pm | 5:00pm | 5:30pm | 6:00pm | 6:30pm | 7:00pm | 7:30pm | 8:00pm | 8:30pm | 9:00pm | 9:30pm | 10:00pm | 10:30pm | 11:00pm | 11:30pm | 12:00am | 12:30am | 1:00-6:00am |
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| 34 | 67 | Special | Smart Kids | Special | Special | Comps. Power Kids | Special | Special | Special | Special | U.S.F. K.I.K. | Special | News | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special |
| 35 | 68 | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special |
| 56 | 69 | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special |
| 57 | 70 | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special |
| 58 | 71 | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special |
| 59 | 72 | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special |
| 60 | 73 | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special |
| 61 | 74 | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special |
| 62 | 75 | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special |
| 63 | 76 | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special |
| 64 | 77 | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special |
| 65 | 78 | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special |
| 66 | 79 | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special |
| 67 | 80 | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special |
| 68 | 81 | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special |
| 69 | 82 | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special |
| 70 | 83 | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special |
| 71 | 84 | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special |
| 72 | 85 | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special |
| 73 | 86 | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special |
| 74 | 87 | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special |
| 75 | 88 | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special |
| 76 | 89 | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special | Special</ | | | | | | | | | | | | | |



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Yassky's war chest loaded with booty

Councilman brings home most bacon in Congressional race

By Gersh Kuntzman
The Brooklyn Papers

City Councilman David Yassky is still the man to beat — and beat up on — in the race to succeed long-time Rep. Major Owens. The Brooklyn Heights Democrat raised more money than any of his four fellow candidates in the first quarter of 2006 — a whopping \$296,000, which was far more than twice the next-best money-raiser, Chris Owens, the retiring congressman's son, who raised just over \$120,000 this quarter.

Yassky's haul adds to a swelling war chest — he now has \$751,000 cash on hand, more than three-and-a-half times as much as state Sen. Carl Andrews (D-Crown Heights) and nearly 12 times more than Owens — as the campaign heats up.

For the second straight quarter, in fact, Yassky was the most-effective money-raiser of any Democratic candidate for an open seat in the county.

Yassky, whose council district is just a tiny, and overwhelmingly white, part of the

majority black 11th congressional district, said his prodigious fundraising speaks to his broad appeal as a candidate.

"It shows that New Yorkers are very excited about electing an effective congressman with fresh ideas," he told The Brooklyn Papers. "The level of support is due to the fact that this campaign is about a fresh agenda."

For their part, Andrews and Owens said they don't need Yassky's money. "The person with the most money is not the one who will win," said Andrews, whose senate district overlaps most of the 11th CD.

"You need a history of working in the neighborhood, which I have. I don't need as much money because people know me. I've lived in the district all my life. I didn't just move into the district."

Yassky moved into the congressional district just as the campaign began.

Owens added: "I had a good quarter because people are realizing that I'm the strongest candidate against David."

Two other candidates —



Yassky's Yiddish faux pas

Sends mailer aimed at Jews to Caribbeans

The Brooklyn Papers

Excuse me, are you Jewish?

City Councilman David Yassky (D-Brooklyn Heights) committed the political faux pas of the week when a mailing targeted to Jewish voters in the 11th congressional district landed a bit afire of the bulls-eye.

"Ask the Fifth Question this Pesach [Passover]," read the flyer, which featured Yassky's photo inset into a piece of matzah. "Are you ready for a con-

gressman who actually gets things done?"

The reference to the "Four Questions" and matzah would be recognizable to Jewish voters.

The flyer was distributed widely in Crown Heights, which has a significant Jewish population, but many Caribbean-Americans received it as well, the New York Observer reported.

It is common for candidates to send different campaign literature to the different ethnic, racial or class groups.

"There's nothing new here," said one insider. "It's just funny that one group ended up seeing a flyer clearly intended for another."

Even Yassky's opponents refrained from Passover rejoicing.

"I won't criticize him for targeting a community on that group's holiday," said Chris Owens, who is the

current congressman's son. "But what made me laugh was that he put his head on the matzah. I wanted to take a bite out of him!"

Yassky appeared embarrassed by the screw up when asked about it by The Brooklyn Papers, but he said he would continue such targeted "direct mail" campaigns as a way of getting his message out.

But the insider hoped Yassky gets his addresses right the next time.

"The only problem for David is that if voters start to think he is focusing only on certain groups — whites, Jews, etc. — so that he can get his magic number [of votes] and win. Clearly, he wants the Orthodox [Jewish] vote, but it can't appear to come at the expense of wanting other people's support."

— Kuntzman

Assemblyman Nick Perry (D-Flatbush) and City Councilwoman Yvette Clarke (D-Crown Heights) — are far back in the money race.

In this quarter, Perry raised \$38,360, while Clarke raised just under \$97,000. But Clarke has only \$36,000 on hand, owing to campaign debts.

Yassky has bigger challenges than merely his opponents.

Two additional white Democratic leaders told The Brooklyn Papers this week that they will not endorse Yassky because they feel the 11th congressional district was drawn to elect a black candidate.

One of the two leaders, who requested anonymity, called Yassky "brilliant" and "the most qualified," but added, "I don't think he should be running in this district."

All four of his opponents have made the same point at various times in the campaign, especially during appearances in the majority-black portions of the district.

Dial 'M' for HS melee

Students tangle with cops over cellphone ban at former John Jay

By Lilo H. Stainton
The Brooklyn Papers

Five students of a Park Slope high school were arrested in an April 12 melee that began as a protest of the Department of Education's longtime ban on cellphones. Students at the Secondary School for Law, Journalism and Research, formerly John Jay HS, marched out of class and onto Seventh Avenue at around 1 p.m. The protest started peacefully, but a scuffle quickly ensued between the students and frustrated school security officers.

Cops arrived and arrested five students. Police records of the incident show that cops used force to subdue at least one of the suspects.

Depending on whom you ask, mobile telephones are either a classroom menace or an emergency lifeline. But whatever the definition, they are banned in schools.

To protest the longstanding ban, teenagers had poured onto Seventh Avenue, where they waved signs and chanted, "We want cellphones!"

The students — police estimated the crowd at 100, but others reported it to be closer to 150 — said it was unfair for school officials to take their property, especially when they need the telephones for emergencies. School officials banned the devices long before they became popular, in 1987, and say they have no plans to reverse course.

Members of 100 Blacks in Law Enforcement, a police-abuse watchdog, have joined students in protesting the police response that day. The group said cellphones are just one of students' many concerns, and that the kids' frustration was mostly due to the "deplorable conditions" at the school, a critical lack of resources and overly aggressive security.

"The cellphone issue was really the straw that broke the camel's back," explained Mary Claxton, a retired police detective and co-founder of 100 Blacks. "There's a lot more to this story."

According to the police report logged at the 78th Precinct, the crowd "engaged in tumultuous and violent conduct (and) intentionally created a grave risk of causing public alarm resulting in police, school officers and other students being injured and property damage to nearby parked vehicles."

Principal Larry Woodbridge called the protest "peaceable," but four students were hit with misdemeanor charges of disorderly conduct. A school security officer struck the fifth suspect, a 15-year-old boy, with his baton after the teen hit a school sergeant on the hand, drawing blood, police said. The student also violently resisted arrest, according to police reports.

Officers said the level of force was necessary to "overcome assault" and claimed the boy's struggle caused further injury to both cops and himself.

But 100 Blacks blamed any injuries, which were minor, on police overreaction. Claims of any property damage were grossly exaggerated, Claxton said.

"It was based on the heavy-handedness of the police department," he said.

One suspect, a 17-year-old girl, may file a complaint against the officers who slammed her into a parked car and verbally assaulted her once in custody, Claxton said.

His group held a press conference with students last week to protest the department's actions. Claxton said 100 Blacks, along with the newly formed Trust U's Student Coalition, plan to march from the John Jay building to local school district headquarters on May 2.

Students also object to the ban on any food or drinks from outside the building, which means they can't bring lunch from home, he said. School officials also don't permit pupils to bring electronics, including laptop computers, into the building.

Students say they wait up to 45 minutes every morning to be screened.

"They have prison rules," Claxton said. The protest also followed stepped-up screening at the school's metal detectors, which resulted in some 80 students losing their phones earlier that week, the New York Times reported.

The day after the Park Slope arrests, Mayor Bloomberg said police would begin using portable metal detectors to conduct random searches at the 80 percent of middle and high schools that don't have permanent screening systems in place. Bloomberg said crime is down on city streets and in schools, but police have confiscated a growing number of weapons from students this year.

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BROOKLYN BRIEFS



Save Darfur

The Brooklyn Papers

Even Brooklyn parking attendants are taking a stand on Darfur.

Edison Park Fast, at Schemerhorn and Livingston streets in Brooklyn Heights, has been using its electronic sign to encourage Brooklynites to march on Washington in support of the troubled Sudanese state next Sunday, April 30. Hundreds of Brooklyn residents are already on board, having reserved space on dozens of buses ferrying people to the rally.

"The people in Brooklyn are more involved than any other parts of New York," said Motasin Adam, president of the Darfur Peoples Association of New York, attributing Brooklyn's commitment to ending the guerrilla war to the fact that most of New York's 200 Darfur refugees live in Kensington and Fort Greene.

Brooklyn Parents for Peace is working to mobilize Brooklyn's stroller set, anticipating that 100 people will join them in Washington. Local churches and synagogues are also basing people down.

The situation in Darfur is a personal one for Adam, who escaped Sudan in 2001. Much of his family remains there, terrorized by Janjaweed bandits, who rape and kill, and by the Sudanese government that wants to cleanse Sudan of Darfur.

Adam hopes the rally will attract at least 100,000 people and put pressure on the Bush Administration to do something beyond sending a telegram to Nicholas Khrushchev congratulating him on his Pulitzer. For more information, visit www.savedarfur.org.

— Dana Rubinstein



The Brooklyn Papers Photo: Chris Schuchman

Ratner's new Web site o'lies

The Brooklyn Papers

There are lies, damn lies and then there's Bruce Ratner's new Web site.

Almost from the moment that www.atlantic-yards.com went live, critics began finding half-

truths and outright dishonesty on the site — the most glaring example, a several-year-old photo of a gutted building labeled "existing conditions."

That building — at 636 Pacific St. — was later renovated into luxury condos. Ratner wants to tear it down to make room for an arena for the Brook-

lyn-bound New Jersey Nets.

Critics say that Ratner's webmaster intentionally chose a pre-renovation shot to suggest that the area is blighted, a requirement before the state can evict its eminent domain powers on behalf of the developer.

But Ratner spokesman Joe DePlasco said the old photo of the Atlantic Arts building was a placeholder and that shots on the Web site "will be updated and revised on a regular basis."

In addition to the bait-and-click on Pacific Street, the virtual Bruce Ratner also lists Rep. Ed Towns (D-Fort Greene) as an unqualified "supporter" of the project.

"We were surprised we were on the Web site," said Towns' chief of staff Karen Johnson. "We do support the project... but we do share the concerns of people who could lose their homes. And we applaud the fact that there will be a full environmental review."

Ratner's people were surprised by Towns's surprise.

"We're surprised to hear this," DePlasco said. "We appreciate the congressman's ongoing support and look forward to working with him to improve the project."

Many activists were stunned that Ratner had also renamed "Miss Brooklyn," the 62-story building that would tower over the adjacent Williamsburgh Bank Building, to "Ms. Brooklyn," as it now appears on Forest City Ratner documents.

"The use of 'Ms. Brooklyn' vs. 'Miss Brooklyn' is part of a larger conspiracy to find out if the editors at The Brooklyn Papers and the opposition bloggers are actually following every little detail." Full disclosure: We are. — Gersh Kuntzman



The Brooklyn Papers Photo: Chris Schuchman



The Brooklyn Papers Photo: Chris Schuchman

On Bruce Ratner's new Web site, 636 Pacific St. is an abandoned building (top). In reality, it was renovated into a luxury co-op.

Cyclones tix on sale

The Brooklyn Papers

By the time you read this, there will probably already be a line at the ticket window at KeySpan Park.

Cyclones tickets don't officially go on sale until 9 a.m. Sunday, but if prior years are any indication, the faithful were hunkering down as this issue went to press.

"I'm always happy to see them [the fanatics] because it means that, even going into year six of this club, we still have fans who are very intense about the team," said Cyclone GM Steve Cohen.

Five years of Cyclone baseball have meant sellout crowds — but Cohen said that good seats are still available for most games.

"It's the hardest perception to change — the notion that there's no reason to come down to the park because every game is a sellout," Cohen said. "Sales are good, but we do have seats."

Cohen has another problem on his hands this year: The Mets.

Now that the mother ship in Queens has finally taken off, Cohen admitted that he may lose some ticket-buyers to his cross-town "rivals."

"During our first season [in 2001], the Mets were



Cyclones mascot Sandy the Seagull.

coming off their pennant-winning year, but by June, when our season started, they were not doing so well," Cohen said. "This year, they're capturing a lot of excitement all over the city, so we recognize it will be a challenge for us."

Yes, but will the Mets be handing out Brian Bannister bobble-head dolls (as the Cyclones will on Sept. 6)? Will the Mets have

an on-field wedding (July 8)? Will the Mets honor Sid Fernandez (Aug. 21)?

No. Plus tickets still start at just \$6 (\$11 if you want to see the players' faces).

In addition to the window sales that begin on Sunday, tickets are also available by phone at (718) 449-8497 or on the team's Web site at www.brooklyncyclones.com. — Kuntzman

Old timers: New Mets park no Ebbets Field

THE METS SAY THEIR new stadium design was "inspired by the tradition" of Ebbets Field.

Then's fighting" words in these parts.

True, I may be the only person in Brooklyn who admits he never saw a game at Ebbets Field. But even without having seen the Dodgers' beloved cathedral of baseball, I find it hard to believe that any new stadium where a cheap seat will cost in the double-digits, where the only trolleys being dodged will be commuter buses in the parking lots, where the music will be pumped into our skulls through the PA system rather than played litely by the Syn-Phony Orchestra, where ballplayers get paid more per at-bat than most people make in a year, and where you can't even curse in some sections, will compare with the great old ballparks of my (or, more accurately, your) youth.

But you don't have to take



An artist's rendering of the new stadium — based on the design of Brooklyn's Ebbets Field (right) — planned for the New York Mets in Flushing, Queens.

my rant for it. I asked a bunch of old guys what they thought of the Ebbets-inspired design (see it for yourself at www.mets.com) and they found it lacking.

"The only thing that resembles Ebbets Field was the [new park's] exterior," said Brooklyn Borough Historian Ron Schweiger.

"Ebbets Field had a seating capacity of about 33,000. The new one will seat 45,000, which makes sense because the Mets have already had two games this season with more than 80,000 people."

Not one of them was Schweiger, of course. He complained of the high ticket prices and the much-higher players' salaries.

"I'm still a big Mets fan, however," he said. "In fact, I have four favorite teams: the Brooklyn Dodgers, the Mets, the Brooklyn Cyclones and whoever is playing the Yankees!"

Fellow old-timer Carl

THE BROOKLYN ANGLE By Gersh Kuntzman

Prince chimed in: "All that's missing is some ambience!" Of course, no modern stadium

Perhaps they can add two- or three-hundred seats directly behind a support beam so your view is blocked. Then it would be perfect."

Of course, no modern stadium



um could be Ebbets Field, with its 297-foot short distance from home plate to the right field wall, and the 40-foot wall protecting Bedford Avenue pedestrians from Duke Snider home runs.

I knew one old guy who would be bothered by that.

"That right-field wall is what made Ebbets Field Ebbets Field," said Dad (not his real name). "And where are the double-decked bleachers in center field? I used to sit up there and call balls and strikes. No one did it better."

The old man was getting angrier by the second.

"Where are the pillars? And why are there so many seats? And what's with all the escalators and elevators? We didn't have those."

Still, I got the sense that the old man was hiding something.

"Do you think you can get us a pair of tickets for Opening Day?"

CHECKIN' IN WITH...

'Peeper' Matthew Beals

Easter has come and gone, but the Peeps — those squishy, pastel-colored, and repugnant (or not, depending on whom you ask) marshmallow chicks — are still with us. That's not much of a shock, given that Harper's Index estimates that 800 million peeps are consumed each year (at the expense of 125,000 pigs, who are needed for the gelatin). Matthew Beals, an East Williamsburg-based documentarian, is so enthralled by these "food" items, that for two and a half years, he's been collecting footage about this half-century-old relic and its strange American following. His documentary, "Power of the Peep," will be released this fall (just in time for the entire nation to start craving them again). This week, he checked in with our Dana Rubinstein.



Q: Why do Peeps merit a movie?

A: What you're really asking is what is it about marshmallow Peeps that inspires such a passion in people? When I say passion, that can mean hate or love. People usually feel pretty strongly about them either way.

Q: How does Peep-passion manifest itself?

A: Well, there's the Sacramento Peep-Off, a huge Peep-eating contest. It's held the first Saturday after Easter, when Peeps start showing up on the clearance rack. It ultimately culminates in a lot of Peep-vomiting and Peep-fighting. There was a Peep wedding when I was last there.

Q: What's a Peep wedding?

A: Archbishop Dave Smith (the grand-master of the Peep-Off) got married to someone — for tax purposes — in a Peep-themed wedding. The winner of the Peep-Off got to serve as the witness for the wedding and signed the wedding papers.

Q: And you have a lot of stories like this?

A: There really is no American who doesn't have a Peep story.

Q: Why are we so obsessed with Peeps?

A: I think it's a collision of a lot of different circumstances. Number one, Peeps are a seasonal thing, so they're not always available. Number two, they come out when spring is coming into bloom, and people's moods are lifting. Number three, they're a

piece of nostalgia. We have grandmothers who had them in their Easter baskets who are now giving them to their grandkids. They are icons of Easter and of American culture. They are symbols of innocence.

Q: Do you like Peeps?

A: I do. For a lot of people, Peeps are sort of this leftover thing in the Easter basket, and there's something about Peeps that demands that they be finished off in some way. They have this blank-slate quality visually.

Q: How are they "finished off"?

A: In the act of eating a Peep, people like to bite the head off or the tail off.

Q: What does it say about people that they like to take a symbol of innocence and bite its head off?

A: I don't know what it is about wanting to take something fresh and pure and wanting to twist it and turn it into something evil. There's something very rebellious about it.

Q: What about people who actually hate them when they're spongy and "fresh" and let them get stale in their cupboards?

A: People are very particular about how they like them. There's a huge fresh/stale argument. Some people also like them frozen.

Q: Did you celebrate Easter growing up?

A: Well, I'm Jewish. So I'm living proof that Peeps do have this quality that inspires something in everyone.

City charges architect with super-sizing his designs

Say Robert Scarano used loopholes to build big

By Ariella Cohen

The Brooklyn Papers

Robert Scarano calls himself the architect of "the new Brooklyn," but the prolific master builder is facing charges that he falsified applications for buildings that are larger than what is allowed under zoning codes.

At least 17 of Scarano's 299 city projects were bigger than they could be by law, according to charges filed by the Department of Buildings.

The charges center on one of Scarano's trademark designs — a double-high ceiling that allows for an airy mezzanine floor in each condo.

Scarano — who is one of many architects who are allowed to "self-certify" their designs — labels such mezzanine space as "storage area" on his blueprints and doesn't add their square footage into the building's total floor-to-area ratio.

He says that city rules only count "living space" in its FAR equation, so his mezzanines are exempt.

"We created that building type through the NYC Building Code," the architect told The Brooklyn Papers. "People never took advantage of the fact that the building code allowed for very high ceilings and a big footprint."

City officials would not respond to Scarano's comment, pending an upcoming hearing. Should the DOB rule against Scarano, he will lose his self-certification privilege.

Also hanging in the balance are Scarano's designs for seven, 12-story condo buildings on recently upzoned Fourth Avenue.

Scarano's mezzanine design is a main feature of the so-called "Minerva" building on Seventh Avenue and 23rd Street in Green-Wood Heights.

The 70-foot building earned him its nickname because if it had been built according to Scarano's original design, it would have blocked a historic view corridor

between the Statue of Liberty and the Minerva statue in Green-Wood Cemetery.

The design has since been scaled back to enable the statues to gaze upon each other.

Scarano is not only in the public eye because his modern designs may have run afoul of city zoning. He is simply unavoidable, thanks to the sheer number of projects he juggles.

Since the early 1990s, 44 of his buildings have been completed — including the 30-old that dot Carroll Gardens, Cobble Hill, Prospect Heights, Red Hook and the Park Slope area. More than 200 more are in various stages of completion.

About 75 percent of his nearly 300 projects are in Kings County.

But his prolificacy has carried a huge price, activists and local officials say.

Last summer, the DOB halted construction of a four-story, 55-foot South Slope project after an 800-pound beam collapsed on a construction worker and killed him.

A second construction worker, Anthony Duncan, died in March when a garage wall designed and inspected by the architect collapsed — and Duncan family lawyer Joseph Tacopina blames Scarano.

The architect works out of one of Brooklyn's most-recognizable buildings, 110 York St., the eye-catching structure with the exposed iron beams that mirror the trusses of the adjacent Manhattan Bridge.

His firm handled the addition to the old brick warehouse. In the evening, Scarano flicks a switch and lights the stylish top, a beacon to anyone crossing from Manhattan back to the promised land of Downtown Brooklyn.

Scarano blames his current troubles on chatty rivals who urged the city to investigate him as a way of slowing him down.

"Not to sound egotistical, but it's jealousy," he said. "We put a lot into our jobs. We've changed the face of what Brooklyn buildings look like. With change comes resistance."



This mezzanine sleeping area in the Robert Scarano-designed Arches of Cobble Hill may violate zoning law, according to the Department of Buildings. Scarano appears in inset.

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